

JOHN BROWN M.D.

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Modern Classics.

RAB, AND MARJORIE FLEMING.

JOHN LEECH.

THACKERAY'S LITERARY CAREER.

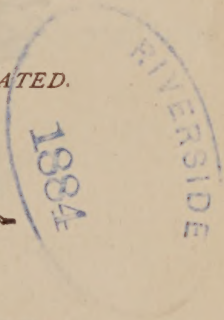
BY

JOHN BROWN, M. D.

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RAB, AND MARJORIE FLEMING.







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TO

MY TWO FRIENDS

At Busby, Renfrewshire,

IN REMEMBRANCE OF A JOURNEY FROM CARSTAIRS
JUNCTION TO TOLEDO AND BACK,

This Story

OF

"RAB AND HIS FRIENDS"

IS INSCRIBED.







RAB AND HIS FRIENDS.

FOUR-AND-THIRTY years ago, Bob Ainslie and I were coming up Infirmary Street from the Edinburgh High School, our heads together, and our arms inter-twisted, as only lovers and boys know how, or why.

When we got to the top of the street, and turned north, we espied a crowd at the Tron Church. "A dog-fight!" shouted Bob, and was off; and so was I, both of us all but praying that it might not be over before we got up! And is not this boy-nature? and human nature too? and don't we all wish a house on fire not to be out before we see it? Dogs like fighting; old Isaac says they "delight" in it, and for the best of all reasons; and boys are not cruel because they like to see the fight. They see three of the great cardinal virtues of dog

or man — courage, endurance, and skill — in intense action. This is very different from a love of making dogs fight, and enjoying, and aggravating, and making gain by their pluck. A boy, be he ever so fond himself of fighting, if he be a good boy, hates and despises all this, but he would have run off with Bob and me fast enough : it is a natural, and a not wicked interest, that all boys and men have in witnessing intense energy in action.

Does any curious and finely ignorant woman wish to know how Bob's eye at a glance announced a dog-fight to his brain ? He did not, he could not see the dogs fighting ; it was a flash of an inference, a rapid induction. The crowd round a couple of dogs fighting is a crowd masculine mainly, with an occasional active, compassionate woman, fluttering wildly round the outside, and using her tongue and her hands freely upon the men, as so many "brutes" ; it is a crowd annular, compact, and mobile ; a crowd centripetal, having its eyes and its heads all bent downwards and inwards, to one common focus.

Well, Bob and I are up, and find it is not over : a small, thoroughbred, white bull-terrier is busy throttling a large shepherd's dog, unac-



customed to war, but not to be trifled with. They are hard at it; the scientific little fellow doing his work in great style, his pastoral enemy fighting wildly, but with the sharpest of teeth and a great courage. Science and breeding, however, soon had their own; the Game Chicken, as the premature Bob called him, working his way up, took his final grip of poor Yarrow's throat, — and he lay gasping and done for. His master, a brown, handsome, big young shepherd from Tweedsmuir, would have liked to have knocked down any man, would “drink up Esil, or eat a crocodile,” for that part, if he had a chance: it was no use kicking the little dog; that would only make him hold the closer. Many were the means shouted out in mouthfuls, of the best possible ways of ending it. “Water!” but there was none near, and many cried for it who might have got it from the well at Blackfriars Wynd. “Bite the tail!” and a large, vague, benevolent, middle-aged man, more desirous than wise, with some struggle got the bushy end of *Yarrow's* tail into his ample mouth, and bit it with all his might. This was more than enough for the much-enduring, much-perspiring shepherd, who, with a gleam of joy over his broad visage, delivered

a terrific facer upon our large, vague, benevolent, middle-aged friend, — who went down like a shot.

Still the Chicken holds; death not far off. “Snuff! a pinch of snuff!” observed a calm, highly dressed young buck, with an eye-glass in his eye. “Snuff, indeed!” growled the angry crowd, affronted and glaring. “Snuff! a pinch of snuff!” again observes the buck, but with more urgency; whereon were produced several open boxes, and from a mull which may have been at Culloden, he took a pinch, knelt down, and presented it to the nose of the Chicken. The laws of physiology and of snuff take their course; the Chicken sneezes, and Yarrow is free!

The young pastoral giant stalks off with Yarrow in his arms, — comforting him.

But the Bull Terrier’s blood is up, and his soul unsatisfied; he grips the first dog he meets, and discovering she is not a dog, in Homeric phrase, he makes a brief sort of *amende*, and is off. The boys, with Bob and me at their head, are after him: down Niddry Street he goes, bent on mischief; up the Cowgate like an arrow, — Bob and I, and our small men, panting behind.

There, under the single arch of the South Bridge, is a huge mastiff, sauntering down the middle of the causeway, as if with his hands in his pockets: he is old, gray, brindled, as big as a little Highland bull, and has the Shakespearian dewlaps shaking as he goes.

The Chicken makes straight at him, and fastens on his throat. To our astonishment, the great creature does nothing but stand still, hold himself up, and roar, — yes, roar; a long, serious, remonstrative roar. How is this? Bob and I are up to them. *He is muzzled!* The bailies had proclaimed a general muzzling, and his master, studying strength and economy mainly, had encompassed his huge jaws in a home-made apparatus, constructed out of the leather of some ancient *breechin*. His mouth was open as far as it could; his lips curled up in rage, — a sort of terrible grin; his teeth gleaming, ready, from out the darkness; the strap across his mouth tense as a bowstring; his whole frame stiff with indignation and surprise; his roar asking us all round, “Did you ever see the like of this?” He looked a statue of anger and astonishment, done in Aberdeen granite.

We soon had a crowd: the Chicken held on. “A knife!” cried Bob; and a cobbler

gave him his knife : you know the kind of knife, worn away obliquely to a point, and always keen. I put its edge to the tense leather ; it ran before it ; and then ! — one sudden jerk of that enormous head, a sort of dirty mist about his mouth, no noise, — and the bright and fierce little fellow is dropped, limp and dead. A solemn pause : this was more than any of us had bargained for. I turned the little fellow over, and saw he was quite dead ; the mastiff had taken him by the small of the back like a rat, and broken it.

He looked down at his victim appeased, ashamed, and amazed ; snuffed him all over, stared at him, and taking a sudden thought, turned round and trotted off. Bob took the dead dog up, and said, “ John, we ’ll bury him after tea.” “ Yes,” said I, and was off after the mastiff. He made up the Cowgate at a rapid swing ; he had forgotten some engagement. He turned up the Candlemaker Row, and stopped at the Harrow Inn.

There was a carrier’s cart ready to start, and a keen, thin, impatient, black-a-vised little man, his hand at his gray horse’s head, looking about angrily for something.

“ Rab, ye thief ! ” said he, aiming a kick at

my great friend, who drew cringing up, and avoiding the heavy shoe with more agility than dignity, and watching his master's eye, slunk dismayed under the cart, — his ears down, and as much as he had of tail down too.

What a man this must be, — thought I, — to whom my tremendous hero turns tail! The carrier saw the muzzle hanging, cut and useless, from his neck, and I eagerly told him the story, which Bob and I always thought, and still think, Homer, or King David, or Sir Walter alone were worthy to rehearse. The severe little man was mitigated, and condescended to say, “Rab, my man, *puir Rabbie*,” — where-upon the stump of a tail rose up, the ears were cocked, the eyes filled, and were comforted; the two friends were reconciled. “Hupp!” and a stroke of the whip were given to Jess; and off went the three.

Bob and I buried the Game Chicken that night (we had not much of a tea) in the back-green of his house in Melville Street, No. 17, with considerable gravity and silence; and being at the time in the *Iliad*, and, like all boys, Trojans, we called him Hector, of course.

Six years have passed, — a long time for a boy and a dog : Bob Ainslie is off to the wars ; I am a medical student, and clerk at Minto House Hospital.

Rab I saw almost every week, on the Wednesday ; and we had much pleasant intimacy. I found the way to his heart by frequent scratching of his huge head, and an occasional bone. When I did not notice him he would plant himself straight before me, and stand wagging that bud of a tail, and looking up, with his head a little to the one side. His master I occasionally saw ; he used to call me “ Maister John,” but was laconic as any Spartan.

One fine October afternoon, I was leaving the hospital, when I saw the large gate open, and in walked Rab, with that great and easy saunter of his. He looked as if taking general possession of the place ; like the Duke of Wellington entering a subdued city, satiated with victory and peace. After him came Jess, now white from age, with her cart ; and in it a woman, carefully wrapped up, — the carrier leading the horse anxiously, and looking back. When he saw me, James (for his name was James Noble) made a curt and grotesque “ boo,” and said, “ Maister John, this is the mistress ; she ’s got

trouble in her breest, — some kind o' an income we're thinkin'."

By this time I saw the woman's face; she was sitting on a sack filled with straw, her husband's plaid round her, and his big-coat, with its large white metal buttons, over her feet.

I never saw a more unforgettable face, — pale, serious, *lonely*,* delicate, sweet, without being at all what we call fine. She looked sixty, and had on a mutch, white as snow, with its black ribbon; her silvery, smooth hair setting off her dark-gray eyes, — eyes such as one sees only twice or thrice in a lifetime, full of suffering, full also of the overcoming of it: her eyebrows black and delicate, and her mouth firm, patient, and contented, which few mouths ever are.

As I have said, I never saw a more beautiful countenance, or one more subdued to settled quiet. "Ailie," said James, "this is Maister John, the young doctor; Rab's freend, ye ken. We often speak aboot you, doctor." She smiled, and made a movement, but said nothing; and prepared to come down, putting her plaid aside and rising. Had Solomon, in all his glory, been handing down the Queen of Sheba at his

* It is not easy giving this look by one word; it was expressive of her being so much of her life alone.

palace gate, he could not have done it more daintily, more tenderly, more like a gentleman, than did James the Howgate carrier, when he lifted down Ailie his wife. The contrast of his small, swarthy, weather-beaten, keen, worldly face to hers — pale, subdued, and beautiful — was something wonderful. Rab looked on concerned and puzzled, but ready for anything that might turn up, — were it to strangle the nurse, the porter, or even me. Ailie and he seemed great friends.

“As I was sayin’, she’s got a kind o’ trouble in her breest, doctor; wull ye tak’ a look at it?” We walked into the consulting-room, all four; Rab grim and comic, willing to be happy and confidential if cause could be shown, willing also to be the reverse, on the same terms. Ailie sat down, undid her open gown and her lawn handkerchief round her neck, and without a word showed me her right breast. I looked at and examined it carefully, — she and James watching me, and Rab eying all three. What could I say? there it was, that had once been so soft, so shapely, so white, so gracious and bountiful, so “full of all blessed conditions,” — hard as a stone, a centre of horrid pain, making that pale face, with its gray,

lucid, reasonable eyes, and its sweet, resolved mouth, express the full measure of suffering overcome. Why was that gentle, modest, sweet woman, clean and lovable, condemned by God to bear such a burden?

I got her away to bed. "May Rab and me bide?" said James. "*You* may; and Rab, if he will behave himself." "I'se warrant he's do that, doctor"; and in slank the faithful beast. I wish you could have seen him. There are no such dogs now. He belonged to a lost tribe. As I have said, he was brindled and gray like Rubislaw granite; his hair short, hard, and close, like a lion's; his body thick-set, like a little bull, — a sort of compressed Hercules of a dog. He must have been ninety pounds' weight, at the least; he had a large blunt head; his muzzle black as night, his mouth blacker than any night, a tooth or too — being all he had — gleaming out of his jaws of darkness. His head was scarred with the records of old wounds, a sort of series of fields of battle all over it; one eye out, one ear cropped as close as was Archbishop Leighton's father's; the remaining eye had the power of two; and above it, and in constant communication with it, was a tattered rag of an ear, which

was forever unfurling itself, like an old flag; and then that bud of a tail, about one inch long, if it could in any sense be said to be long, being as broad as long, — the mobility, the instantaneousness of that bud were very funny and surprising, and its expressive twinklings and winkings, the intercommunications between the eye, the ear, and it, were of the oddest and swiftest.

Rab had the dignity and simplicity of great size; and having fought his way all along the road to absolute supremacy, he was as mighty in his own line as Julius Cæsar or the Duke of Wellington, and had the gravity* of all great fighters.

You must have often observed the likeness of certain men to certain animals, and of certain dogs to men. Now, I never looked at Rab without thinking of the great Baptist preacher, Andrew Fuller.† The same large,

* A Highland game-keeper, when asked why a certain terrier, of singular pluck, was so much more solemn than the other dogs, said, "O, sir, life's full o' sairiousness to him, — he just never can get enuff o' fechtin'."

† Fuller was, in early life, when a farmer lad at Soham, famous as a boxer; not quarrelsome, but not without "the stern delight" a man of strength and courage feels in their exercise. Dr. Charles Stewart, of Dunearn, whose rare gifts and graces as a physician, a divine, a scholar, and a gentle-

heavy, menacing, combative, sombre, honest countenance, the same deep inevitable eye, the same look, — as of thunder asleep, but ready, — neither a dog nor a man to be trifled with.

Next day, my master, the surgeon, examined Ailie. There was no doubt it must kill her, and soon. It could be removed — it might never return — it would give her speedy relief — she should have it done. She courtesied, looked at James, and said, “When?” “To-morrow,” said the kind surgeon, — a man of few words. She and James and Rab and I retired. I noticed that he and she spoke little, but seemed to anticipate everything in each other. The following day, at noon, the students came in, hurrying up the great stair. At the first landing-place, on a small, well-known blackboard, was a bit of paper fastened by wafers, and many remains of old wafers

man live only in the memory of those few who knew and survive him, liked to tell how Mr. Fuller used to say, that when he was in the pulpit, and saw a *buirdly* man come along the passage, he would instinctively draw himself up, measure his imaginary antagonist, and forecast how he would deal with him, his hands meanwhile condensing into fists, and tending to “square.” He must have been a hard hitter if he boxed as he preached, — what “The Fancy” would call “an ugly customer.”

beside it. On the paper were the words, —
 “An operation to-day. J. B. Clerk.”

Up ran the youths, eager to secure good places: in they crowded, full of interest and talk. “What’s the case?” “Which side is it?”

Don’t think them heartless; they are neither better nor worse than you or I; they get over their professional horrors, and into their proper work, — and in them pity, as an *emotion*, ending in itself or at best in tears and a long-drawn breath, lessens, while pity as a *motive* is quickened, and gains power and purpose. It is well for poor human nature that it is so.

The operating theatre is crowded; much talk and fun, and all the cordiality and stir of youth. The surgeon with his staff of assistants is there. In comes Ailie: one look at her quiets and abates the eager students. That beautiful old woman is too much for them; they sit down, and are dumb, and gaze at her. These rough boys feel the power of her presence. She walks in quickly, but without haste; dressed in her mutch, her neckerchief, her white dimity short-gown, her black bombazine petticoat, showing her white worsted stockings and her carpet-shoes. Behind her was James

with Rab. James sat down in the distance, and took that huge and noble head between his knees. Rab looked perplexed and dangerous ; forever cocking his ear and dropping it as fast.

Ailie stepped up on a seat, and laid herself on the table, as her friend the surgeon told her ; arranged herself, gave a rapid look at James, shut her eyes, rested herself on me, and took my hand. The operation was at once begun ; it was necessarily slow ; and chloroform — one of God's best gifts to his suffering children — was then unknown. The surgeon did his work. The pale face showed its pain, but was still and silent. Rab's soul was working within him ; he saw that something strange was going on, — blood flowing from his mistress, and she suffering ; his ragged ear was up, and importunate ; he growled, and gave now and then a sharp, impatient yelp ; he would have liked to have done something to that man. But James had him firm, and gave him a *glower* from time to time, and an intimation of a possible kick ; — all the better for James, it kept his eye and his mind off Ailie.

It is over : she is dressed, steps gently and decently down from the table, looks for James ;

then turning to the surgeon and the students, she courtesies, — and in a low, clear voice, begs their pardon if she has behaved ill. The students — all of us — wept like children ; the surgeon happed her up carefully, — and, resting on James and me, Ailie went to her room, Rab following. We put her to bed. James took off his heavy shoes, crammed with tacks, heel-capt and toe-capt, and put them carefully under the table, saying, “Maister John, I’m for nane o’ yer stryng nurse bodies for Ailie. I’ll be her nurse, and I’ll gang about on my stockin’ soles as canny as pussy.” And so he did ; and handy and clever, and swift and tender as any woman, was that horny-handed, snell, peremptory little man. Everything she got he gave her : he seldom slept ; and often I saw his small shrewd eyes out of the darkness, fixed on her. As before, they spoke little.

Rab behaved well, never moving, showing us how meek and gentle he could be, and occasionally, in his sleep, letting us know that he was demolishing some adversary. He took a walk with me every day, generally to the Candlemaker Row ; but he was sombre and mild ; declined doing battle, though some fit cases

offered, and indeed submitted to sundry indignities ; and was always very ready to turn, and came faster back, and trotted up the stair with much lightness, and went straight to that door.

Jess, the mare, had been sent, with her weather-worn cart, to Howgate, and had doubtless her own dim and placid meditations and confusions, on the absence of her master and Rab, and her unnatural freedom from the road and her cart.

For some days Ailie did well. The wound healed "by the first intention" ; for, as James said, "Oor Ailie's skin's ower clean to beil." The students came in quiet and anxious, and surrounded her bed. She said she liked to see their young, honest faces. The surgeon dressed her, and spoke to her in his own short, kind way, pitying her through his eyes, Rab and James outside the circle, — Rab being now reconciled, and even cordial, and having made up his mind that as yet nobody required worrying, but, as you may suppose, *semper paratus*.

So far well : but, four days after the operation, my patient had a sudden and long shivering, a "groosin'," as she called it. I saw her soon after ; her eyes were too bright, her cheek

colored ; she was restless, and ashamed of being so ; the balance was lost ; mischief had begun. On looking at the wound, a blush of red told the secret : her pulse was rapid, her breathing anxious and quick, she was n't herself, as she said, and was vexed at her restlessness. We tried what we could. James did everything, was everywhere ; never in the way, never out of it ; Rab subsided under the table into a dark place, and was motionless, all but his eye, which followed every one. Ailie got worse ; began to wander in her mind, gently ; was more demonstrative in her ways to James, rapid in her questions, and sharp at times. He was vexed, and said, "She was never that way afore ; no, never." For a time she knew her head was wrong, and was always asking our pardon, — the dear, gentle old woman : then delirium set in strong, without pause. Her brain gave way, and then came that terrible spectacle, —

"The intellectual power, through words and things,
Went sounding on its dim and perilous way" ;

she sang bits of old songs and Psalms, stopping suddenly, mingling the Psalms of David and the diviner words of his Son and Lord

with homely odds and ends and scraps of ballads.

Nothing more touching, or in a sense more strangely beautiful, did I ever witness. Her tremulous, rapid, affectionate, eager Scotch voice, — the swift, aimless, bewildered mind, the baffled utterance, the bright and perilous eye; some wild words, some household cares, something for James, the names of the dead, Rab called rapidly and in a “fremyt” voice, and he starting up surprised, and slinking off as if he were to blame somehow, or had been dreaming he heard; many eager questions and beseechings which James and I could make nothing of, and on which she seemed to set her all, and then sink back ununderstood. It was very sad, but better than many things that are not called sad. James hovered about, put out and miserable, but active and exact as ever; read to her, when there was a lull, short bits from the Psalms, prose and metre, chanting the latter in his own rude and serious way, showing great knowledge of the fit words, bearing up like a man, and doating over her as his “ain Ailie.” “Ailie, ma woman!” “Ma ain bonnie wee dawtie!”

The end was drawing on: the golden bowl

was breaking ; the silver cord was fast being loosed, — that *animula blandula, vagula, hospes, comesque*, was about to flee. The body and the soul — companions for sixty years — were being sundered, and taking leave. She was walking alone through the valley of that shadow into which one day we must all enter, — and yet she was not alone, for we know whose rod and staff were comforting her.

One night she had fallen quiet, and, as we hoped, asleep ; her eyes were shut. We put down the gas, and sat watching her. Suddenly she sat up in bed, and taking a bedgown which was lying on it rolled up, she held it eagerly to her breast, — to the right side. We could see her eyes bright with a surprising tenderness and joy, bending over this bundle of clothes. She held it as a woman holds her sucking child ; opening out her nightgown impatiently, and holding it close, and brooding over it, and murmuring foolish little words, as over one whom his mother comforteth, and who sucks and is satisfied. It was pitiful and strange to see her wasted dying look, keen and yet vague, — her immense love.

“Preserve me !” groaned James, giving way. And then she rocked back and forward,

as if to make it sleep, hushing it, and wasting on it her infinite fondness. "Wae 's me, doctor; I declare she's thinkin' it's that bairn." "What bairn?" "The only bairn we ever had; our wee Mysie, and she's in the Kingdom, forty years and mair." It was plainly true: the pain in the breast, telling its urgent story to a bewildered, ruined brain, was misread and mistaken; it suggested to her the uneasiness of a breast full of milk, and then the child; and so again once more they were together, and she had her ain wee Mysie in her bosom.

This was the close. She sank rapidly: the delirium left her; but, as she whispered, she was "clean silly"; it was the lightening before the final darkness. After having for some time lain still, her eyes shut, she said, "James!" He came close to her, and lifting up her calm, clear, beautiful eyes, she gave him a long look, turned to me kindly but shortly, looked for Rab but could not see him, then turned to her husband again, as if she would never leave off looking, shut her eyes, and composed herself. She lay for some time breathing quick, and passed away so gently, that when we thought she was gone, James, in

his old-fashioned way, held the mirror to her face. After a long pause, one small spot of dimness was breathed out; it vanished away, and never returned, leaving the blank clear darkness of the mirror without a stain. "What is our life? it is even a vapor, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

Rab all this time had been full awake and motionless; he came forward beside us: Ailie's hand, which James had held, was hanging down; it was soaked with his tears; Rab licked it all over carefully, looked at her, and returned to his place under the table.

James and I sat, I don't know how long, but for some time, — saying nothing: he started up abruptly, and with some noise went to the table, and putting his right fore and middle fingers each into a shoe, pulled them out, and put them on, breaking one of the leather latchets, and muttering in anger, "I never did the like o' that afore!"

I believe he never did; nor after either. "Rab!" he said roughly, and pointing with his thumb to the bottom of the bed. Rab leapt up, and settled himself; his head and eye to the dead face. "Maister John, ye'll wait for me," said the carrier; and disappeared

in the darkness, thundering down stairs in his heavy shoes. I ran to a front window; there he was, already round the house, and out at the gate, fleeing like a shadow.

I was afraid about him, and yet not afraid; so I sat down beside Rab, and being wearied, fell asleep. I awoke from a sudden noise outside. It was November, and there had been a heavy fall of snow. Rab was *in statu quo*; he heard the noise too, and plainly knew it, but never moved. I looked out; and there, at the gate, in the dim morning — for the sun was not up — was Jess and the cart, — a cloud of steam rising from the old mare. I did not see James; he was already at the door, and came up the stairs, and met me. It was less than three hours since he left, and he must have posted out — who knows how? — to Howgate, full nine miles off, yoked Jess, and driven her astonished into town. He had an armful of blankets, and was streaming with perspiration. He nodded to me, spread out on the floor two pairs of clean old blankets having at their corners, “A. G., 1794,” in large letters in red worsted. These were the initials of Alison Græme, and James may have looked in at her from without, — himself un-

seen but not unthought of, — when he was “wat, wat, and weary,” and after having walked many a mile over the hills, may have seen her sitting, while “a’ the lave were sleepin’”; and by the firelight working her name on the blankets, for her ain James’s bed.

He motioned Rab down, and taking his wife in his arms, laid her in the blankets, and happed her carefully and firmly up, leaving the face uncovered; and then lifting her, he nodded again sharply to me, and with a resolved but utterly miserable face strode along the passage, and down stairs, followed by Rab. I followed with a light; but he did n’t need it. I went out, holding stupidly the candle in my hand in the calm frosty air; we were soon at the gate. I could have helped him, but I saw he was not to be meddled with, and he was strong, and did not need it. He laid her down as tenderly, as safely, as he had lifted her out ten days before, — as tenderly as when he had her first in his arms when she was only “A. G.,” — sorted her, leaving that beautiful sealed face open to the heavens; and then taking Jess by the head, he moved away. He did not notice me, neither did Rab, who presided behind the cart. I stood till they passed through the long



shadow of the College, and turned up Nicolson Street. I heard the solitary cart sound through the streets, and die away and come again ; and I returned, thinking of that company going up Libberton Brae, then along Roslin Muir, the morning light touching the Pentlands and making them like on-looking ghosts ; then down the hill through Auchindinny woods, past "haunted Woodhouselee" ; and as daybreak came sweeping up the bleak Lammermuirs, and fell on his own door, the company would stop, and James would take the key, and lift Ailie up again, laying her on her own bed, and, having put Jess up, would return with Rab and shut the door.

James buried his wife, with his neighbors mourning, Rab inspecting the solemnity from a distance. It was snow, and that black ragged hole would look strange in the midst of the swelling spotless cushion of white. James looked after everything ; then rather suddenly fell ill, and took to bed ; was insensible when the doctor came, and soon died. A sort of low fever was prevailing in the village, and his want of sleep, his exhaustion, and his misery made him apt to take it. The grave was not difficult to reopen. A fresh fall of snow had

again made all things white and smooth; Rab once more looked on, and slunk home to the stable.

And what of Rab? I asked for him next week at the new carrier who got the goodwill of James's business, and was now master of Jess and her cart. "How's Rab?" He put me off, and said rather rudely, "What's *your* business wi' the dowg?" I was not to be so put off. "Where's Rab?" He, getting confused and red, and intermeddling with his hair, said, "'Deed, sir, Rab's deid." "Dead! what did he die of?" "Weel, sir," said he, getting redder, "he didna exactly dee; he was killed. I had to brain him wi' a rack-pin; there was nae doin' wi' him. He lay in the treviss wi' the mear, and wadna come oot. I temptit him wi' kail and meat, but he wad tak naething, and keepit me frae feedin' the beast, and he was aye gur gurrin', and grup gruppin' me by the legs. I was laith to make awa wi' the auld dowg, his like wasna atween this and Thornhill, — but, 'deed, sir, I could do naething else." I believed him. Fit end for Rab, quick and complete. His teeth and his friends gone, why should he keep the peace, and be civil?



MARJORIE FLEMING.







TO
MISS FLEMING,
TO WHOM I AM INDEBTED FOR ALL ITS MATERIALS,
This Memorial
OF HER DEAR AND UNFORGOTTEN
MAIDIE
IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED.







MARJORIE FLEMING.



ONE November afternoon in 1810 — the year in which *Waverley* was resumed and laid aside again, to be finished off, its last two volumes in three weeks, and made immortal in 1814, and when its author, by the death of Lord Melville, narrowly escaped getting a civil appointment in India — three men, evidently lawyers, might have been seen escaping like school-boys from the Parliament House, and speeding arm-in-arm down Bank Street and the Mound, in the teeth of a surly blast of sleet.

The three friends sought the *biold* of the low wall old Edinburgh boys remember well, and sometimes miss now, as they struggle with the stout west-wind.

The three were curiously unlike each other. One, “a little man of feeble make, who would

be unhappy if his pony got beyond a foot pace," slight, with "small, elegant features, hectic cheek, and soft hazel eyes, the index of the quick, sensitive spirit within, as if he had the warm heart of a woman, her genuine enthusiasm, and some of her weaknesses." Another, as unlike a woman as a man can be; homely, almost common, in look and figure; his hat and his coat, and indeed his entire covering, worn to the quick, but all of the best material; what redeemed him from vulgarity and meanness were his eyes, deep set, heavily thatched, keen, hungry, shrewd, with a slumbering glow far in, as if they could be dangerous; a man to care nothing for at first glance, but somehow to give a second and not-forgetting look at. The third was the biggest of the three, and though lame, nimble, and all rough and alive with power, had you met him anywhere else, you would say he was a Liddesdale store-farmer, come of gentle blood; "a stout, blunt carle," as he says of himself, with the swing and stride and the eye of a man of the hills, — a large, sunny, out-of-door air all about him. On his broad and somewhat stooping shoulders was set that head which, with Shakespeare's and Bonaparte's, is the best known in all the world.

He was in high spirits, keeping his companions and himself in roars of laughter, and every now and then seizing them, and stopping, that they might take their fill of the fun; there they stood shaking with laughter, "not an inch of their body free" from its grip. At George Street they parted, one to Rose Court, behind St. Andrew's Church, one to Albany Street, the other, our big and limping friend, to Castle Street.

We need hardly give their names. The first was William Erskine, afterwards Lord Kinnedder, chased out of the world by a calumny, killed by its foul breath, —

"And at the touch of wrong, without a strife,
Slipped in a moment out of life."

There is nothing in literature more beautiful or more pathetic than Scott's love and sorrow for this friend of his youth.

The second was William Clerk, — the *Darsie Latimer* of *Redgauntlet*; "a man," as Scott says, "of the most acute intellects and powerful apprehension," but of more powerful indolence, so as to leave the world with little more than the report of what he might have been, — a humorist as genuine, though not quite so

savagely Swiftian as his brother, Lord Eldin, neither of whom had much of that commonest and best of all the humors, called good.

The third we all know. What has he not done for every one of us? Who else ever, except Shakespeare, so diverted mankind, entertained and entertains a world so liberally, so wholesomely? We are fain to say, not even Shakespeare, for his is something deeper than diversion, something higher than pleasure, and yet who would care to split this hair?

Had any one watched him closely before and after the parting, what a change he would see! The bright, broad laugh, the shrewd, jovial word, the man of the Parliament House and of the world; and next step, moody, the light of his eye withdrawn, as if seeing things that were invisible; his shut mouth, like a child's, so impressionable, so innocent, so sad; he was now all within, as before he was all without; hence his brooding look. As the snow blattered in his face, he muttered, "How it raves and drifts! On-ding o' snaw, — ay, that's the word, — on-ding —" He was now at his own door, "Castle Street, No. 39." He opened the door, and went straight to his den; that wondrous workshop, where, in one year, 1823, when he

was fifty-two, he wrote *Peveril of the Peak*, *Quentin Durward*, and *St. Ronan's Well*, besides much else. We once took the foremost of our novelists, the greatest, we would say, since Scott, into this room, and could not but mark the solemnizing effect of sitting where the great magician sat so often and so long, and looking out upon that little shabby bit of sky and that back green, where faithful Camp lies.*

He sat down in his large green morocco elbow-chair, drew himself close to his table, and glowered and gloomed at his writing apparatus, "a very handsome old box, richly carved, lined with crimson velvet, and containing ink-bottles, taper-stand, etc., in silver, the whole in such order that it might have come from the silversmith's window half an hour before." He took out his paper, then starting up angrily, said, "'Go spin, you jade, go spin.' No, d—it, it won't do, —

* This favorite dog "died about January, 1809, and was buried in a fine moonlight night in the little garden behind the house in Castle Street. My wife tells me she remembers the whole family in tears about the grave as her father himself smoothed the turf above Camp, with the saddest face she had ever seen. He had been engaged to dine abroad that day, but apologized, on account of the death of 'a dear old friend.' " — LOCKHART'S *Life of Scott*.

'My spinnin' wheel is auld and stiff,
The rock o't wunna stand, sir,
To keep the temper-pin in tiff
Employs ower aft my hand, sir.'

I am off the fang.* I can make nothing of *Waverley* to-day; I'll awa' to Marjorie. Come wi' me, Maida, you thief." The great creature rose slowly, and the pair were off, Scott taking a *maud* (a plaid) with him. "White as a frosted plum-cake, by jingo!" said he, when he got to the street. Maida gambolled and whisked among the snow, and his master strode across to Young Street, and through it to 1 North Charlotte Street, to the house of his dear friend, Mrs. William Keith, of Corstorphine Hill, niece of Mrs. Keith, of Ravelston, of whom he said at her death, eight years after, "Much tradition, and that of the best, has died with this excellent old lady, one of the few persons whose spirits and *cleanliness* and freshness of mind and body made old age lovely and desirable."

Sir Walter was in that house almost every day, and had a key, so in he and the hound went, shaking themselves in the lobby. "Mar-

* Applied to a pump when it is dry, and its valve has lost its "fang"; from the German *fangen*, to hold.



jorie ! Marjorie ! ” shouted her friend, “ where are ye, my bonnie wee croodlin doo ? ” In a moment a bright, eager child of seven was in his arms, and he was kissing her all over. Out came Mrs. Keith. “ Come yer ways in, Wattie.” “ No, not now. I am going to take Marjorie wi’ me, and you may come to your tea in Duncan Roy’s sedan, and bring the bairn home in your lap.” “ Tak’ Marjorie, and it *on-ding o’ snaw !* ” said Mrs. Keith. He said to himself, “ On-ding, — that ’s odd, — that is the very word.” “ Hoot, awa ! look here,” and he displayed the corner of his plaid, made to hold lambs (the true shepherd’s plaid, consisting of two breadths sewed together, and uncut at one end, making a poke or *cul de sac*). “ Tak’ yer lamb,” said she, laughing at the contrivance ; and so the Pet was first well hopped up, and then put, laughing silently, into the plaid neuk, and the shepherd strode off with his lamb, — Maida gambolling through the snow, and running races in her mirth.

Did n’t he face “ the angry airt,” and make her bield his bosom, and into his own room with her, and lock the door, and out with the warm, rosy little wifie, who took it all with great composure ! There the two remained

for three or more hours, making the house ring with their laughter; you can fancy the big man's and Maidie's laugh. Having made the fire cheery, he set her down in his ample chair, and standing sheepishly before her, began to say his lesson, which happened to be, — "Ziccotty, diccotty, dock, the mouse ran up the clock, the clock struck wan, down the mouse ran, ziccotty, diccotty, dock." This done repeatedly till she was pleased, she gave him his new lesson, gravely and slowly, timing it upon her small fingers, — he saying it after her, —

"Wonery, twoery, tickery, seven;
Alibi, crackaby, ten, and eleven;
Pin, pan, musky, dan;
Tweedle-um, twoddle-um,
Twenty-wan; eerie, orie, ourie,
You, are, out."

He pretended to great difficulty, and she rebuked him with most comical gravity, treating him as a child. He used to say that when he came to Alibi Crackaby he broke down, and Pin-Pan, Musky-Dan, Tweedle-um Twoddle-um made him roar with laughter. He said *Musky-Dan* especially was beyond endurance, bringing up an Irishman and his hat fresh from the Spice Islands and odoriferous Ind; she getting quite

bitter in her displeasure at his ill-behavior and stupidity.

Then he would read ballads to her in his own glorious way, the two getting wild with excitement over *Gil Morrice* or the *Baron of Smailholm*; and he would take her on his knee, and make her repeat Constance's speeches in *King John*, till he swayed to and fro, sobbing his fill. Fancy the gifted little creature, like one possessed, repeating, —

“For I am sick, and capable of fears,
Oppressed with wrong, and therefore full of fears;
A widow, husbandless, subject to fears;
A woman, naturally born to fears.”

“If thou that bidst me be content, wert grim,
Ugly and slanderous to thy mother's womb,
Lame, foolish, crooked, swart, prodigious —”

Or, drawing herself up “to the height of her great argument,” —

“I will instruct my sorrows to be proud,
For grief is proud, and makes his owner stout.
Here I and sorrow sit.”

Scott used to say that he was amazed at her power over him, saying to Mrs. Keith, “She's the most extraordinary creature I ever met with, and her repeating of Shakespeare overpowers me as nothing else does.”

Thanks to the unforgetting sister of this dear child, who has much of the sensibility and fun of her who has been in her small grave these fifty and more years, we have now before us the letters and journals of Pet Marjorie, — before us lies and gleams her rich brown hair, bright and sunny as if yesterday's, with the words on the paper, "Cut out in her last illness," and two pictures of her by her beloved Isabella, whom she worshipped; there are the faded old scraps of paper, hoarded still, over which her warm breath and her warm little heart had poured themselves; there is the old water-mark, "Lingard, 1808." The two portraits are very like each other, but plainly done at different times; it is a chubby, healthy face, deep-set, brooding eyes, as eager to tell what is going on within as to gather in all the glories from without; quick with the wonder and the pride of life; they are eyes that would not be soon satisfied with seeing; eyes that would devour their object, and yet childlike and fearless; and that is a mouth that will not be soon satisfied with love; it has a curious likeness to Scott's own, which has always appeared to us his sweetest, most mobile and speaking feature.

There she is, looking straight at us as she did at him, — fearless and full of love, passionate, wild, wilful, fancy's child. One cannot look at it without thinking of Wordsworth's lines on poor Hartley Coleridge : —

“ O blessed vision, happy child !
Thou art so exquisitely wild,
I thought of thee with many fears,
Of what might be thy lot in future years.
I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
Lord of thy house and hospitality ;
And Grief, uneasy lover ! ne'er at rest,
But when she sat within the touch of thee.
O, too industrious folly !
O, vain and causeless melancholy !
Nature will either end thee quite,
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
Preserve for thee by individual right
A young lamb's heart among the full-grown flock.”

And we can imagine Scott, when holding his warm, plump little playfellow in his arms, repeating that stately friend's lines : —

“ Loving she is, and tractable, though wild,
And Innocence hath privilege in her,
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes,
And feats of cunning ; and the pretty round
Of trespasses, affected to provoke
Mock chastisement and partnership in play.
And, as a fagot sparkles on the hearth,
Not less if unattended and alone,
Than when both young and old sit gathered round,

And take delight in its activity,
Even so this happy creature of herself
Is all-sufficient ; solitude to her
Is blithe society ; she fills the air
With gladness and involuntary songs ”

But we will let her disclose herself. We need hardly say that all this is true, and that these letters are as really Marjorie's as was this light brown hair ; indeed, you could as easily fabricate the one as the other.

There was an old servant, Jeanie Robertson, who was forty years in her grandfather's family. Marjorie Fleming, or, as she is called in the letters, and by Sir Walter, Maidie, was the last child she kept. Jeanie's wages never exceeded £ 3 a year, and, when she left service, she had saved £ 40. She was devotedly attached to Maidie, rather despising and ill-using her sister Isabella, — a beautiful and gentle child. This partiality made Maidie apt at times to domineer over Isabella. “ I mention this ” (writes her surviving sister) “ for the purpose of telling you an instance of Maidie's generous justice. When only five years old, when walking in Raith grounds, the two children had run on before, and old Jeanie remembered they might come too near a dangerous mill-lade. She called to them to turn back.

Maidie heeded her not, rushed all the faster on, and fell, and would have been lost, had her sister not pulled her back, saving her life, but tearing her clothes. Jeanie flew on Isabella to 'give it her' for spoiling her favorite's dress; Maidie rushed in between, crying out, 'Pay (whip) Maidie as much as you like, and I'll not say one word; but touch Isy, and I'll roar like a bull!' Years after Maidie was resting in her grave, my mother used to take me to the place, and told the story always in the exact same words." This Jeanie must have been a character. She took great pride in exhibiting Maidie's brother William's Calvinistic acquirements, when nineteen months old, to the officers of a militia regiment then quartered in Kirkcaldy. This performance was so amusing that it was often repeated, and the little theologian was presented by them with a cap and feathers. Jeanie's glory was "putting him through the carritch" (catechism) in broad Scotch, beginning at the beginning with, "Wha made ye, ma bonnie man?" For the correctness of this and the three next replies Jeanie had no anxiety, but the tone changed to menace, and the closed *nieve* (fist) was shaken in the child's face as she demanded, "Of what

are you made?" "DIRT," was the answer uniformly given. "Wull ye never learn to say *dust*, ye thrawn deevil?" with a cuff from the opened hand, was the as inevitable rejoinder.

Here is Maidie's first letter before she was six. The spelling unaltered, and there are no "commoes."

"MY DEAR ISA, — I now sit down to answer all your kind and beloved letters which you was so good as to write to me. This is the first time I ever wrote a letter in my Life. There are a great many Girls in the Square and they cry just like a pig when we are under the painfull necessity of putting it to Death. Miss Potune a Lady of my acquaintance praises me dreadfully. I repeated something out of Dean Swift, and she said I was fit for the stage, and you may think I was primmed up with majestick Pride, but upon my word I felt myselve turn a little birsay — birsay is a word which is a word that William composed which is as you may suppose a little enraged. This horrid fat simpliton says that my Aunt is beautifull which is intirely impossible for that is not her nature."

What a peppery little pen we wield! What could that have been out of the Sardonic Dean? what other child of that age would have used

“beloved” as she does? This power of affection, this faculty of *beloving*, and wild hunger to be beloved, comes out more and more. She perilled her all upon it, and it may have been as well—we know, indeed, that it was far better—for her that this wealth of love was so soon withdrawn to its one only infinite Giver and Receiver. This must have been the law of her earthly life. Love was indeed “her Lord and King”; and it was perhaps well for her that she found so soon that her and our only Lord and King himself is Love.

Here are bits from her Diary at Braehead: “The day of my existence here has been delightful and enchanting. On Saturday I expected no less than three well made Bucks the names of whom is here advertised. Mr. Geo. Crakey (Craigie), and Wm. Keith and Jn. Keith—the first is the funniest of every one of them. Mr. Crakey and walked to Crakyhall (Craigiehall) hand in hand in Innocence and matitation (meditation) sweet thinking on the kind love which flows in our tender hearted mind which is overflowing with majestic pleasure no one was ever so polite to me in the hole state of my existence. Mr. Craky you must know is a great Buck and pretty good-looking.

"I am at Ravelston enjoying nature's fresh air. The birds are singing sweetly — the calf doth frisk and nature shows her glorious face."

Here is a confession: "I confess I have been very more like a little young divil than a creature for when Isabella went up stairs to teach me religion and my multiplication and to be good and all my other lessons I stamped with my foot and threw my new hat which she had made on the ground and was sulky and was dreadfully passionate, but she never whiped me but said Marjory go into another room and think what a great crime you are committing letting your temper git the better of you. But I went so sulkily that the Devil got the better of me but she never never never whips me so that I think I would be the better of it and the next time that I behave ill I think she should do it for she never does it. . . . Isabella has given me praise for checking my temper for I was sulky even when she was kneeling an hole hour teaching me to write."

Our poor little wifie, *she* has no doubts of the personality of the Devil! "Yesterday I behave extremely ill in God's most holy church for I would never attend myself nor let Isabella attend which was a great crime for she often,

often tells me that when to or three are geathered together God is in the midst of them, and it was the very same Divil that tempted Job that tempted me I am sure ; but he resisted Satan though he had boils and many many other misfortunes which I have escaped. . . . I am now going to tell you the horrible and wretched plaege (plague) that my multiplication gives me you can't conceive it the most Devilish thing is 8 times 8 and 7 times 7 it is what nature itself cant endure."

This is delicious ; and what harm is there in her " Devilish " ? it is strong language merely ; even old Rowland Hill used to say " he grudged the Devil those rough and ready words." " I walked to that delightful place Crakyhall with a delightful young man beloved by all his friends especially by me his loveress, but I must not talk any more about him for Isa said it is not proper for to speak of gentalmen but I will never forget him ! . . . I am very very glad that satan has not given me boils and many other misfortunes — In the holy bible these words are written that the Devil goes like a roaring lyon in search of his pray but the lord lets us escape from him but we" (*pauvre petite !*) " do not strive with this awfull Spirit.

. . . . To-day I pronounced a word which should never come out of a lady's lips it was that I called John a Impudent Bitch. I will tell you what I think made me in so bad a humor is I got one or two of that bad bad sina (senna) tea to-day," — a better excuse for bad humor and bad language than most.

She has been reading the Book of Esther : "It was a dreadful thing that Haman was hanged on the very gallows which he had prepared for Mordeca to hang him and his ten sons thereon and it was very wrong and cruel to hang his sons for they did not commit the crime ; *but then Jesus was not then come to teach us to be merciful.*" This is wise and beautiful, — has upon it the very dew of youth and of holiness. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He perfects his praise.

"This is Saturday and I am very glad of it because I have play half the Day and I get money too but alas I owe Isabella 4 pence for I am finned 2 pence whenever I bite my nails. Isabella is teaching me to make simme colings nots of interrigrations peorids commoes, etc. As this is Sunday I will meditate upon Senciabable and Religious subjects. First I should be very thankful I am not a begger."

This amount of meditation and thankfulness seems to have been all she was able for.

“I am going to-morrow to a delightful place, Braehead by name, belonging to Mrs. Crraford, where there is ducks cocks hens bablyjocks 2 dogs 2 cats and swine which is delightful. I think it is shocking to think that the dog and cat should bear them” (this is a meditation physiological), “and they are drowned after all. I would rather have a man-dog than a woman-dog, because they do not bear like women-dogs ; it is a hard case — it is shocking. I cam here to enjoy natures delightful breath it is sweeter than a fial (phial) of rose oil.”

Braehead is the farm the historical Jock Howison asked and got from our gay James the Fifth, “the gudeman o’ Ballengiech,” as a reward for the services of his flail when the King had the worst of it at Cramond Brig with the gypsies. The farm is unchanged in size from that time, and still in the unbroken line of the ready and victorious thrasher. Braehead is held on the condition of the possessor being ready to present the King with a ewer and basin to wash his hands, Jock having done this for his unknown king after the *splore*, and when George the Fourth came to Edinburgh

this ceremony was performed in silver at Holyrood. It is a lovely neuk this Braehead, preserved almost as it was two hundred years ago. "Lot and his wife," mentioned by Maidie, — two quaintly cropped yew-trees, — still thrive; the burn runs as it did in her time, and sings the same quiet tune, — as much the same and as different as *Now* and *Then*. The house full of old family relics and pictures, the sun shining on them through the small deep windows with their plate-glass; and there, blinking at the sun, and chattering contentedly, is a parrot, that might, for its looks of eld, have been in the ark, and domineered over and *deaved* the dove. Everything about the place is old and fresh.

This is beautiful: "I am very sorry to say that I forgot God — that is to say I forgot to pray to-day and Isabella told me that I should be thankful that God did not forget me — if he did, O what become of me if I was in danger and God not friends with me — I must go to unquenchable fire and if I was tempted to sin — how could I resist it O no I will never do it again — no no — if I can help it." (Canny wee wifie!) "My religion is greatly falling off because I dont pray with so much

attention when I am saying my prayers, and my charecter is lost among the Braehead people. I hope I will be religious again — but as for regaining my charecter I despare for it.” (Poor little “habit and repute” !)

Her temper, her passion, and her “badness” are almost daily confessed and deplored: “I will never again trust to my own power, for I see that I cannot be good without God’s assistance — I will not trust in my own selfe, and Isa’s health will be quite ruined by me — it will indeed.” “Isa has giving me advice, which is, that when I feal Satan beginning to tempt me, that I flea him and he would flea me.” “Remorse is the worst thing to bear, and I am afraid that I will fall a marter to it.”

Poor dear little sinner! — Here comes the world again: “In my travels I met with a handsome lad named Charles Balfour Esq., and from him I got ofers of marage — offers of marage, did I say? Nay plenty heard me.” A fine scent for “breach of promise” !

This is abrupt and strong: “The Divil is curced and all works. ’T is a fine work *Newton on the profecies*. I wonder if there is another book of poems comes near the Bible. The Divil always girms at the sight of the

Bible." "Miss Potune" (her "simpliton" friend) "is very fat; she pretends to be very learned. She says she saw a stone that dropt from the skies; but she is a good Christian." Here come her views on church government: "An Annibabtist is a thing I am not a member of — I am a Pislekan (Episcopalian) just now, and" (O you little Laodicean and Latitudinarian!) "a Prisbeteran at Kirk-caldy!" — (*Blandula! Vagula! cælum et animum mutas quæ trans mare* (i. e. *trans Bodotriam*)-*curris!*) — "my native town." "Sentiment is not what I am acquainted with as yet, though I wish it, and should like to practise it" (!) "I wish I had a great, great deal of gratitude in my heart, in all my body." "There is a new novel published, named *Self-Control*" (Mrs. Brunton's) — "a very good maxim forsooth!" This is shocking: "Yesterday a marrade man, named Mr. John Balfour, Esq., offered to kiss me, and offered to marry me, though the man" (a fine directness this!) "was espused, and his wife was present and said he must ask her permission; but he did not. I think he was ashamed and confounded before 3 gentelman — Mr. Jobson and 2 Mr. Kings." "Mr. Banester's" (Ban-

nister's) "Budget is to-night; I hope it will be a good one. A great many authors have expressed themselves too sentimentally." You are right, Marjorie. "A Mr. Burns writes a beautiful song on Mr. Cunhaming, whose wife deserted him—truly it is a most beautiful one." "I like to read the Fabulous historys, about the historys of Robin, Dickey, flapsay, and Peccay, and it is very amusing, for some were good birds and others bad, but Peccay was the most dutiful and obedient to her parients." "Thomson is a beautiful author, and Pope, but nothing to Shakespear, of which I have a little knolege. *Macbeth* is a pretty composition, but awful one." "The *Newgate Calender* is very instructive" (!) "A sailor called here to say farewell; it must be dreadful to leave his native country when he might get a wife; or perhaps me, for I love him very much. But O I forgot, Isabella forbid me to speak about love." This antiphlogistic regimen and lesson is ill to learn by our Maidie, for here she sins again: "Love is a very papi-thatick thing" (it is almost a pity to correct this into pathetic), "as well as troublesome and tiresome—but O Isabella forbid me to speak of it." Here are her reflections on a

pineapple : " I think the price of a pine-apple is very dear : it is a whole bright goulden guinea, that might have sustained a poor family." Here is a new vernal simile : " The hedges are sprouting like chicks from the eggs when they are newly hatched or, as the vulgar say, *clacked*." " Doctor Swift's works are very funny ; I got some of them by heart." " Moreheads sermons are I hear much praised, but I never read sermons of any kind ; but I read novelettes and my Bible, and I never forget it, or my prayers." Bravo, Marjorie !

She seems now, when still about six, to have broken out into song : —

EPHIBOL (EPIGRAM OR EPITAPH — WHO KNOWS WHICH ?)
ON MY DEAR LOVE ISABELLA.

" Here lies sweet Isabell in bed,
With a night-cap on her head ;
Her skin is soft, her face is fair,
And she has very pretty hair ;
She and I in bed lies nice,
And undisturbed by rats or mice ;
She is disgusted with Mr. Worgan,
Though he plays upon the organ.
Her nails are neat, her teeth are white,
Her eyes are very, very bright ;
In a conspicuous town she lives,
And to the poor her money gives :
Here ends sweet Isabella's story,
And may it be much to her glory."

Here are some bits at random : —

“Of summer I am very fond,
And love to bathe into a pond ;
The look of sunshine dies away,
And will not let me out to play ;
I love the morning’s sun to spy
Glittering through the casement’s eye,
The rays of light are very sweet,
And puts away the taste of meat ;
The balmy breeze comes down from heaven,
And makes us like for to be living.”

“The casawary is an curious bird, and so is the gigantic crane, and the pelican of the wilderness, whose mouth holds a bucket of fish and water. Fighting is what ladies is not qualified for, they would not make a good figure in battle or in a duel. Alas ! we females are of little use to our country. The history of all the malcontents as ever was hanged is amusing.” Still harping on the Newgate Calendar !

“Braehead is extremely pleasant to me by the companie of swine, geese, cocks, etc., and they are the delight of my soul.”

“I am going to tell you of a melancholy story. A young turkie of 2 or 3 months old, would you believe it, the father broke its leg, and he killed another ! I think he ought to be transported or hanged.”

"Queen Street is a very gay one, and so is Princes Street, for all the lads and lasses, besides bucks and beggars, parade there."

"I should like to see a play very much, for I never saw one in all my life, and don't believe I ever shall; but I hope I can be content without going to one. I can be quite happy without my desire being granted."

"Some days ago Isabella had a terrible fit of the toothake, and she walked with a long night-shift at dead of night like a ghost, and I thought she was one. She prayed for nature's sweet restorer — balmy sleep — but did not get it — a ghostly figure indeed she was, enough to make a saint tremble. It made me quiver and shake from top to toe. Superstition is a very mean thing, and should be despised and shunned."

Here is her weakness and her strength again: "In the love-novels all the heroines are very desperate. Isabella will not allow me to speak about lovers and heroins, and 't is too refined for my taste." "Miss Egward's (Edgeworth's) tails are very good, particularly some that are very much adapted for youth (!) as Laz Laurance and Tarelton, False Keys, etc. etc."

"Tom Jones and Grey's Elegey in a country churchyard are both excellent, and much spoke of by both sex, particularly by the men." Are our Marjories nowadays better or worse because they cannot read Tom Jones unharmed? More better than worse; but who among them can repeat Gray's Lines on a Distant Prospect of Eton College as could our Maidie?

Here is some more of her prattle: "I went into Isabella's bed to make her smile like the Genius Demedicus" (the Venus de Medicis) "or the statute in an ancient Greece, but she fell asleep in my very face, at which my anger broke forth, so that I awoke her from a comfortable nap. All was now hushed up again, but again my anger burst forth at her bidding me get up."

She begins thus loftily, —

"Death the righteous love to see,
But from it doth the wicked flee."

Then suddenly breaks off (as if with laughter), —

"I am sure they fly as fast as their legs can carry them!"

"There is a thing I love to see,
That is our monkey catch a flee."

"I love in Isa's bed to lie,
Oh, such a joy and luxury!
The bottom of the bed I sleep,
And with great care within I creep;
Oft I embrace her feet of lillys,
But she has goton all the pillys.
Her neck I never can embrace,
But I do hug her feet in place."

How childish and yet how strong and free is her use of words! "I lay at the foot of the bed because Isabella said I disturbed her by continial fighting and kicking, but I was very dull, and continially at work reading the Arabian Nights, which I could not have done if I had slept at the top. I am reading the Mysteries of Udolpho. I am much interested in the fate of poor, poor Emily."

Here is one of her swains:—

"Very soft and white his cheeks,
His hair is red, and grey his breeks;
His tooth is like the daisy fair,
His only fault is in his hair."

This is a higher flight:—

"DEDICATED TO MRS. H. CRAWFORD BY THE AUTHOR,
M. F.

"Three turkeys fair their last have breathed,
And now this world forever leaved;
Their father, and their mother too,
They sigh and weep as well as you;
Indeed, the rats their bones have crunched,

Into eternity their launched.
A direful death indeed they had,
As wad put any parent mad;
But she was more than usual calm,
She did not give a single dam."

This last word is saved from all sin by its tender age, not to speak of the want of the *n*. We fear "she" is the abandoned mother, in spite of her previous sighs and tears.

"Isabella says when we pray we should pray fervently, and not rattel over a prayer — for that we are kneeling at the footstool of our Lord and Creator, who saves us from eternal damnation, and from unquestionable fire and brimston."

She has a long poem on Mary Queen of Scots: —

"Queen Mary was much loved by all,
Both by the great and by the small,
But hark! her soul to heaven doth rise!
And I suppose she has gained a prize —
For I do think she would not go
Into the *awful* place below;
There is a thing that I must tell,
Elizabeth went to fire and hell;
He who would teach her to be civil,
It must be her great friend the devil!"

She hits off Darnley well: —

"A noble's son, a handsome lad,
By some queer way or other, had

Got quite the better of her heart,
 With him she always talked apart;
 Silly he was, but very fair,
 A greater buck was not found there."

"By some queer way or other"; is not this the general case and the mystery, young ladies and gentlemen? Goethe's doctrine of "elective affinities" discovered by our Pet Maidie.

SONNET TO A MONKEY.

"O lively, O most charming pug
 Thy graceful air, and heavenly mug;
 The beauties of his mind do shine,
 And every bit is shaped and fine.
 Your teeth are whiter than the snow,
 Your a great buck, your a great beau;
 Your eyes are of so nice a shape,
 More like a Christian's than an ape;
 Your cheek is like the rose's blume,
 Your hair is like the raven's plume;
 His nose's cast is of the Roman,
 He is a very pretty woman.
 I could not get a rhyme for Roman,
 So was obliged to call him woman."

This last joke is good. She repeats it when writing of James the Second being killed at Roxburgh:—

"He was killed by a cannon splinter,
 Quite in the middle of the winter;
 Perhaps it was not at that time,
 But I can get no other rhyme!"

Here is one of her last letters, dated Kirkcaldy, 12th October, 1811. You can see how her nature is deepening and enriching: "MY DEAR MOTHER, — You will think that I entirely forget you but I assure you that you are greatly mistaken. I think of you always and often sigh to think of the distance between us two loving creatures of nature. We have regular hours for all our occupations first at 7 o'clock we go to the dancing and come home at 8 we then read our Bible and get our repeating and then play till ten then we get our music till 11 when we get our writing and accounts we sew from 12 till 1 after which I get my gramer and then work till five. At 7 we come and knit till 8 when we dont go to the dancing. This is an exact description. I must take a hasty farewell to her whom I love, reverence and doat on and who I hope thinks the same of

"MARJORY FLEMING.

"*P. S.* — An old pack of cards (!) would be very exseptible."

This other is a month earlier: "MY DEAR LITTLE MAMA, — I was truly happy to hear that you were all well. We are surrounded

with measles at present on every side, for the Herons got it, and Isabella Heron was near Death's Door, and one night her father lifted her out of bed, and she fell down as they thought lifeless. Mr. Heron said, 'That lassie's deed noo' — 'I'm no deed yet.' She then threw up a big worm nine inches and a half long. I have begun dancing, but am not very fond of it, for the boys strikes and mocks me. — I have been another night at the dancing; I like it better. I will write to you as often as I can; but I am afraid not every week. *I long for you with the longings of a child to embrace you — to fold you in my arms. I respect you with all the respect due to a mother. You dont know how I love you. So I shall remain, your loving child — M. FLEMING.*"

What rich involution of love in the words marked! Here are some lines to her beloved Isabella, in July, 1811: —

"There is a thing that I do want,
With you these beauteous walks to haunt,
We would be happy if you would
Try to come over if you could.
Then I would all quite happy be
Now and for all eternity.
My mother is so very sweet,
And checks my appetite to eat;

My father shows us what to do ;
But O I 'm sure that I want you.
I have no more of poetry ;
O Isa do remember me,
And try to love your Marjory."

In a letter from " Isa " to

" Miss Muff Maidie Marjory Fleming.
favored by Rare Rear-Admiral Fleming,"

she says : " I long much to see you, and talk over all our old stories together, and to hear you read and repeat. I am pining for my old friend Cesario, and poor Lear, and wicked Richard. How is the dear Multiplication table going on ? are you still as much attached to 9 times 9 as you used to be ? "

But this dainty, bright thing is about to flee, — to come " quick to confusion." The measles she writes of seized her, and she died on the 19th of December, 1811. The day before her death, Sunday, she sat up in bed, worn and thin, her eye gleaming as with the light of a coming world, and with a tremulous, old voice repeated the following lines by Burns, — heavy with the shadow of death, and lit with the fantasy of the judgment-seat, — the publican's prayer in paraphrase : —

" Why am I loth to leave this earthly scene ?
Have I so found it full of pleasing charms ?

Some drops of joy, with draughts of ill between,
Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewing storms.
Is it departing pangs my soul alarms?
Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode?
For guilt, for GUILT my terrors are in arms;
I tremble to approach an angry God,
And justly smart beneath his sin-avenging rod.

"Fain would I say, forgive my foul offence,
Fain promise never more to disobey;
But should my Author health again dispense,
Again I might forsake fair virtue's way,
Again in folly's path might go astray,
Again exalt the brute and sink the man.
Then how should I for heavenly mercy pray,
Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan,
"Who sin so oft have mourned, yet to temptation ran?"

"O thou great Governor of all below,
If I might dare a lifted eye to thee,
Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
And still the tumult of the raging sea;
With that controlling power assist even me
Those headstrong furious passions to confine,
For all unfit I feel my powers to be
To rule their torrent in the allowed line;
O aid me with thy help, OMNIPOTENCE DIVINE."

It is more affecting than we care to say to read her mother's and Isabella Keith's letters written immediately after her death. Old and withered, tattered and pale, they are now: but when you read them, how quick, how throbbing with life and love! how rich in that language of affection which only women, and

Shakespeare, and Luther can use, — that power of detaining the soul over the beloved object and its loss.

“K. Philip to Constance.

You are as fond of grief as of your child.

Const. Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me;
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form.
Then I have reason to be fond of grief.”

What variations cannot love play on this one string !

In her first letter to Miss Keith, Mrs. Fleming says of her dead Maidie: “Never did I behold so beautiful an object. It resembled the finest wax-work. There was in the countenance an expression of sweetness and serenity which seemed to indicate that the pure spirit had anticipated the joys of heaven ere it quitted the mortal frame. To tell you what your Maidie said of you would fill volumes; for you was the constant theme of her discourse, the subject of her thoughts, and ruler of her actions. The last time she mentioned you was a few hours before all sense save that of suffering was suspended, when she said to Dr. Johnstone, ‘If you will let me out at the New Year, I will

be quite contented.' I asked what made her so anxious to get out then. 'I want to purchase a New Year's gift for Isa Keith with the sixpence you gave me for being patient in the measles; and I would like to choose it myself.' I do not remember her speaking afterwards, except to complain of her head, till just before she expired, when she articulated, 'O mother! mother!'"

Do we make too much of this little child, who has been in her grave in Abbotshall Kirkyard these fifty and more years? We may of her cleverness, — not of her affectionateness, her nature. What a picture the *animosa infans* gives us of herself, her vivacity, her passionateness, her precocious love-making, her passion for nature, for swine, for all living things, her reading, her turn for expression, her satire, her frankness, her little sins and rages, her great repentances! We don't wonder Walter Scott carried her off in the neuk of his plaid, and played himself with her for hours.

The year before she died, when in Edinburgh, she was at a Twelfth Night supper at Scott's, in Castle Street. The company had all come, — all but Marjorie. Scott's familiars, whom we all



know, were there, — all were come but Marjorie; and all were dull because Scott was dull. “Where’s that bairn? what can have come over her? I’ll go myself and see.” And he was getting up, and would have gone, when the bell rang, and in came Duncan Roy and his henchman Tougald, with the sedan-chair, which was brought right into the lobby, and its top raised. And there, in its darkness and dingy old cloth, sat Maidie in white, her eyes gleaming, and Scott bending over her in ecstasy, — “hung over her enamored.” “Sit ye there, my dautie, till they all see you”; and forthwith he brought them all. You can fancy the scene. And he lifted her up and marched to his seat with her on his stout shoulder, and set her down beside him; and then began the night, and such a night! Those who knew Scott best said that night was never equalled; Maidie and he were the stars; and she gave them Constance’s speeches and *Helvellyn*, the ballad then much in vogue, and all her *répertoire*, — Scott showing her off, and being oftentimes rebuked by her for his intentional blunders.

We are indebted for the following — and our readers will be not unwilling to share our

obligations—to her sister: “Her birth was 15th January, 1803; her death, 19th December, 1811. I take this from her Bibles.* I believe she was a child of robust health, of much vigor of body, and beautifully formed arms, and until her last illness, never was an hour in bed. She was niece to Mrs. Keith, residing in No. 1 North Charlotte Street, who was *not* Mrs. Murray Keith, although very intimately acquainted with that old lady. My aunt was a daughter of Mr. James Rae, surgeon, and married the younger son of old Keith of Ravelstone. Corstorphine Hill belonged to my aunt’s husband; and his eldest son, Sir Alexander Keith, succeeded his uncle to both Ravelstone and Dunnottar. The Keiths were not connected by relationship with the Howisons of Braehead; but my grandfather and grandmother (who was), a daughter of Cant of Thurston and Giles-Grange, were on the most intimate footing with *our* Mrs. Keith’s grandfather and grandmother; and so it has been for three generations, and the friendship consummated by my cousin William Keith marrying Isabella Craufurd.

* “Her Bible is before me; *a pair*, as then called; the faded marks are just as she placed them. There is one at David’s lament over Jonathan.”

“As to my aunt and Scott, they were on a very intimate footing. He asked my aunt to be godmother to his eldest daughter, Sophia Charlotte. I had a copy of Miss Edgeworth’s ‘Rosamond, and Harry and Lucy’ for long, which was ‘a gift to Marjorie from Walter Scott,’ probably the first edition of that attractive series, for it wanted ‘Frank,’ which is always now published as part of the series, under the title of *Early Lessons*. I regret to say these little volumes have disappeared.”

“Sir Walter was no relation of Marjorie’s, but of the Keiths, through the Swintons ; and, like Marjorie, he stayed much at Ravelstone in his early days, with his grand-aunt Mrs. Keith ; and it was while seeing him there as a boy, that another aunt of mine composed, when he was about fourteen, the lines prognosticating his future fame that Lockhart ascribes in his *Life* to Mrs. Cockburn, authoress of ‘*The Flowers of the Forest*’ : —

‘Go on, dear youth, the glorious path pursue
Which bounteous Nature kindly smooths for you ;
Go bid the seeds her hands have sown arise,
By timely culture, to their native skies ;
Go, and employ the poet’s heavenly art,
Not merely to delight, but mend the heart.’

Mrs. Keir was my aunt’s name, another of Dr.

Rae's daughters." We cannot better end than in words from this same pen: "I have to ask you to forgive my anxiety in gathering up the fragments of Marjorie's last days, but I have an almost sacred feeling to all that pertains to her. You are quite correct in stating that measles were the cause of her death. My mother was struck by the patient quietness manifested by Marjorie during this illness, unlike her ardent, impulsive nature; but love and poetic feeling were unquenched. When Dr. Johnstone rewarded her submissiveness with a sixpence, the request speedily followed that she might get out ere New Year's day came. When asked why she was so desirous of getting out, she immediately rejoined, 'O, I am so anxious to buy something with my sixpence for my dear Isa Keith.' Again, when lying very still, her mother asked her if there was anything she wished: 'O yes! if you would just leave the room door open a wee bit, and play "The Land o' the Leal," and I will lie and *think*, and enjoy myself' (this is just as stated to me by her mother and mine). Well, the happy day came, alike to parents and child, when Marjorie was allowed to come forth from the nursery to the parlor. It was Sabbath even-

ing, and after tea. My father, who idolized this child, and never afterwards in my hearing mentioned her name, took her in his arms ; and while walking her up and down the room, she said, ‘ Father, I will repeat something to you ; what would you like ? ’ He said, ‘ Just choose yourself, Maidie.’ She hesitated for a moment between the paraphrase, ‘ Few are thy days, and full of woe,’ and the lines of Burns already quoted, but decided on the latter, a remarkable choice for a child. The repeating these lines seemed to stir up the depths of feeling in her soul. She asked to be allowed to write a poem ; there was a doubt whether it would be right to allow her, in case of hurting her eyes. She pleaded earnestly, ‘ Just this once’ ; the point was yielded, her slate was given her, and with great rapidity she wrote an address of fourteen lines, ‘ to her loved cousin on the author’s recovery,’ her last work on earth : —

‘ Oh ! Isa, pain did visit me,
I was at the last extremity ;
How often did I think of you,
I wished your graceful form to view,
To clasp you in my weak embrace,
Indeed I thought I’d run my race :
Good care, I’m sure, was of me taken,

But still indeed I was much shaken,
At last I daily strength did gain,
And oh ! at last, away went pain ;
At length the doctor thought I might
Stay in the parlor all the night ;
I now continue so to do,
Farewell to Nancy and to you.'

She went to bed apparently well, awoke in the middle of the night with the old cry of woe to a mother's heart, ' My head, my head ! ' Three days of the dire malady, ' water in the head,' followed, and the end came."

"Soft, silken primrose, fading timelessly."

It is needless, it is impossible, to add anything to this: the fervor, the sweetness, the flush of poetic ecstacy, the lovely and glowing eye, the perfect nature of that bright and warm intelligence, that darling child, — Lady Nairne's words, and the old tune, stealing up from the depths of the human heart, deep calling unto deep, gentle and strong like the waves of the great sea hushing themselves to sleep in the dark ; — the words of Burns touching the kindred chord, her last numbers " wildly sweet " traced, with thin and eager fingers, already touched by the last enemy and friend, — *morien's canit*, — and that love which is so

soon to be her everlasting light, is her song's burden to the end.

“She set as sets the morning star, which goes
Not down behind the darkened west, nor hides
Obscured among the tempests of the sky,
But melts away into the light of heaven.”







JOHN LEECH.







“How arch! how lovely! how maidenly in this their
‘sweet hour of prim.’” — See page 71.



JOHN LEECH.



IF man is made to mourn, he also, poor fellow ! and without doubt therefore, is made to laugh. He needs it all, and he gets it. For human nature may say of herself, in the words of the ballad, "Werena my heart licht, I wad die."

Man is the only animal that laughs ; it is as peculiar to him as his chin and his *hippocampus minor*.* The perception of a joke,

* No other animal has a chin proper ; and it is a comfort, in its own small way, that Mr. Huxley has not yet found the lesser sea-horse in our grandfather's brain.

the smile, the sense of the ludicrous, the quiet laugh, the roar of laughter, are all our own ; and we may be laughed as well as tickled to death, as in the story of the French nun of mature years, who, during a vehement fit of laughter, was observed by her sisters to sit suddenly still and look very “gash” (like the Laird of Garscadden*), this being considered a further part of the joke, when they found she was elsewhere.

In books, old and new, there is no end of philosophizing upon the ludicrous and its cause ; from Aristotle, who says it is some error in truth or propriety, but at the same time neither painful nor pernicious ; and Cicero, who defines it as that which, without impropriety, notes and exposes an impropriety ; to Jean Paul, who says it is the opposite of the sublime, the infinitely great,

* *Vide* Dean Ramsay's *Reminiscences*.

and is therefore the infinitely little ; and Kant, who gives it as the sudden conversion into nothing of a long raised and highly wrought expectation ; many have been the attempts to unsphere the spirit of a joke and make it tell its secret ; but we agree with our excellent and judicious friend Quintilian, that its *ratio* is at best *anceps*. There is a certain robust felicity about old Hobbes's saying, that " it is a *sudden glory*, or sense of eminency above others or our former selves." There is no doubt at least about the suddenness and the glory ; all true laughter must be involuntary, must come and go as it lists, must take us, and shake us heartily and by surprise. No man can laugh any more than he can sneeze at will, and he has nearly as little to do with its ending : it dies out, disdaining to be killed. He may grin and guffaw, because these are worked by muscles under the dominion of volition ; but your

diaphragm, the midriff, into which your joker pokes his elbow, he is the great organ of genuine laughter and the sudden glory, and he, as you all know, when made absurd by hiccup, is masterless as the wind, "untamable as flies"; therefore is he called by the grave Haller, *nobilissimus post cor musculus*; for, ladies and gentlemen, your heart is only a (often very) hollow muscle. If you wish to know what is done in your interior when you laugh, here it is from Dr. Carpenter. He classes it along with sobbing and hiccup, and says: "In it the muscles of expiration are in convulsive movement, more or less violent, and send out the breath in a series of jerks, the *glottis* being open," — the *glottis* being the little chink at the top of the wind-pipe.

As to the mental impression on the sensorium that sets these jerks agoing, and arches that noble muscle, we, as already said, think

it may be left to a specific sense of its own, and that laughter is the effect and very often the cause of the laughable, and therefore of itself, — a definition which has the merit of being self-contained. But is it not well that we are made to laugh, that, from the first sleepy gleam moving like sunshine over an infant's cheek, to the cheery and feeble chirrup of his great-grandfather by the fireside, we laugh at the laughable, when the depths of our strange nature are dappled and rippled, or tossed into wildest laughter by anything, so that it be droll, just as we shudder when soused with cold water, — because we can't help it?

But we are drifting into disquisition, and must beware. What is it to us or the public that the pneumogastric and phrenic nerves are the telegraphs from their headquarters in the brain to this same midriff; that if cut, there would be an end of our funny mes-

sages, and of a good deal more ; that the *musculus nobilissimus*, if wounded in its feelings from without or from within, takes to outrageous laughter of the dreariest sort ; that if anything goes wrong at the central *thalami*, as they are called, of these nerves, the vehicles of will and feeling, they too make sad fools of themselves by sending down absurd, incoherent telegrams “at lairge” ?

One might be diffuse upon the various ways in which laughter seizes upon and deals with mankind : how it excruciates some, making them look and yell as if caught in a trap. How a man takes to crowing like a cock, or as if under permanent hooping-cough, ending his series of explosions victoriously with his well-known “clarion wild and shrill.” How provocative of laughter such a musical performance always is to his friends, leading them to lay snares for

him ! We knew an excellent man — a country doctor — who, if wanted in the village, might be traced out by his convivial crew. It was droll to observe him resisting internally and on the sly the beginnings of his *bravura* ; how it always prevailed. How another friend, huge, learned, and wise, whom laughter seizes and rends, is made desperate, and at times ends in crashing his chair, and concluding his burst on its ruins, and on the floor. In houses where he is familiar, a special chair is set for him, braced with iron for the stress.

Then one might discourse on the uses of laughter as a muscular exercise ; on its drawing into action lazy muscles, supernumeraries, which get off easily under ordinary circumstances ; how much good the convulsive succussion of the whole man does to his chylo-poietic and other viscera ; how it laughs to scorn care and *malaise* of all kinds ;

how it makes you cry without sorrow, and ache every inch of you without wrong done to any one ; how it clears the liver and enlivens the spleen, and makes the very cockles of the heart to tingle. By the by, what are these cockles of tradition but the *columnæ carneæ*, that pull away at the valves, and keep all things tight ?

But why should we trouble ourselves and you with either the physiology or the philosophy of laughter, when all that anybody needs to say or to hear is said, so as to make all after saying hopeless and needless, by Sydney Smith, in his two chapters on Wit and Humor, in his *Notes of Lectures on Moral Philosophy* ? Why it is that when any one — except possibly Mr. Tupper — hears for the first time that wisest of wits' joke to his doctor, when told by him to "take a walk on an empty stomach" ; — "on whose ?" — he laughs right out, loud and strong, may

be a question as hard to answer as the why he curls up his nose when tickled with a straw, or sneezes when he looks at the sun ; but it is not hard to be thankful for the joke, and for the tickle, and for the sneeze. Our business rather is now gratefully to acknowledge the singular genius, the great personal and artistic worth, of one of our best masters of " heart-easing mirth," than to discourse upon the why and how he makes us laugh so pleasantly, so wholesomely and well, — and to deplore, along with all his friends, (who has not in him lost a friend ?) his sudden and irreparable loss. It was as if something personal to every one was gone ; as if a fruit we all ate and rejoiced in had vanished forever ; a something good and cheery, and to be thankful for, which came every week as sure as Thursday — never to come again. Our only return to him for all his unfailing goodness and cheer is the memory

of the heart ; and he has it if any man in the British empire has. The noble, honest, kindly, diligent, sound-hearted, modest, and manly John Leech,—the very incarnation in look, character, and work of the best in an Englishman.

As there is and has always been, since we had letters or art of our own, a rich abounding power and sense of humor and of fun in the English nature, so ever since that same nature was pleased to divert and express itself and its jokes in art as well as in books, we have had no lack of depictees of the droll, the odd, the terrible, and the queer. Hogarth is the first and greatest of them all, the greatest master in his own *terribile via* the world has ever seen. If you want to know his worth and the exquisite beauty of his coloring, study his pictures, and possess his prints, and read Charles Lamb on his genius. Then came the savage Gillray, strong and

coarse as Churchill, the very Tipton Slasher of political caricature ; then we had Bunbury, Rowlandson, and Woodward, more violent than strong, more odd than droll, and often more disgusting than either. Smirke, with his delicate, pure, pleasant humor, as seen in his plates to *Don Quixote*, which are not unworthy of that marvellous book, the most deeply and exquisitely humorous piece of genius in all literature ; then Edwin Landseer's *Monkeyana*, forgotten by and we fear unknown to many, so wickedly funny, so awfully human, as almost to convert us to Mr. Huxley's pedigree, — *The Duel*, for instance. Then we had Henry Alken in the Hunting Field, and poor Heath, the ex-Captain of Dragoons, facile and profuse, unscrupulous and clever. Then the greatest since Hogarth, though limited in range and tending to excess, George Cruickshank, who happily still lives and plies his matchless

needle ; — it would take an entire paper to expound his keen, penetrating power, his moral intensity, his gift of wild grimace, the dexterity and super-subtlety of his etching, its firm and delicate lines. Then came poor short-lived tragical Seymour, whom Thackeray wished to succeed as artist to *Pickwick* ; he embodied *Pickwick* as did “ Phiz,” — Hablot Browne, — *Messrs. Quilp* and *Pecksniff*, and *Micky Free*, and whose steeple-chasing Irish cocktails we all know and relish ; but his manner is too much for him and for us, and his ideas are neither deep nor copious, hence everlasting and weak repetitions of himself. Kenny Meadows, with more genius, especially for fiends and all eldritch fancies, and still more mannerism. Sibson and Hood, whose drawings were quaint and queer enough, but his words better and queerer. Thackeray, very great, answering wonderfully his own idea. We

wonder that his *Snobs* and *Modern Novelists* and miscellaneous papers were ever published without his own cuts. What would *Mrs. Perkins's Ball* be without *The Mulligan*, as the spread-eagle, frantic and glorious, doing the mazurka, without *Miss Bunyon*, and them all ; and the good little *Nightingale*, singing "Home, Sweet Home" to that young, premature brute Hewlett, in *Dr. Birch*. But we have already recorded our estimate of Mr. Thackeray's worth as an artist ;* and all his drolleries and quaint bits of himself, — his comic melancholy, his wistful children, his terrific soldans in the early *Punches*. They should all be collected, — wherever he escapes from his pen to his pencil, they should never be divorced. Then Doyle, with his wealth of dainty fantasies, his glamourie, his won-

* North British Review, No. LXXIX., February, 1864.

derful power of expressing the weird and uncanny, his fairies and goblins, his enchanted castles and maidens, his plump caracolling pony chargers, his charm of color and of unearthly beauty in his water-colors. No one is more thoroughly himself and alone than Doyle. We need only name his father, "H. B.," the master of gentlemanly, political satire, — as Gillray was of brutal. Tenniel we still have, excellent, careful and often strong and effective; but more an artist and a draughtsman than a genius or a humorist.

John Leech is different from all these, and, taken as a whole, surpasses them all, even Cruickshank, and seats himself next, though below, William Hogarth. Well might Thackeray, in his delightful notice of his friend and fellow-Carthusian in *The Quarterly*, say, "There is no blinking the fact, that in Mr. Punch's Cabinet John Leech

is the right-hand man. Fancy a number of *Punch* without Leech's picture ! What would you give for it ?" This was said ten years ago. How much more true it is now ! We don't need to *fancy* it any longer. And yet, doubtless, Nature is already preparing some one else — she is forever filling her horn — whom we shall never think better, or in his own way, half so good, but who like him will be, let us trust, new and true, modest and good ; let us, meanwhile, rest and be thankful, and look back on the past. We'll move on by and by, "to fresh fields and pastures new," we suppose, and hope.

We are not going to give a biography, or a studied appraisalment of this great artist, — that has been already well done in the *Cornhill*, — and we trust the mighty "J. O.," who knew him and loved him as a brother, and whose strong and fine hand — its truth, nicety, and power — we think we recognize

in an admirable short notice of Leech as one of the "Men of Mark," in the *London Review* of May 31, 1862, -- may employ his leisure in giving us a memorial of his friend. No one could do it better, not even the judicious Tom Taylor, and it is worth his while to go down the great stream side by side with such a man. All that we shall now do is to give some particulars, not, so far as we know, given to the public, and end with a few selected woodcuts from *Punch*, -- illustrative of his various moods and gifts, -- for which we are indebted to the kindness of Messrs. Bradbury and Evans, -- two men to whom and to whose noble generosity and enterprise we owe it that *Punch* is what he is ; men who have made their relation to him and to his staff of writers and artists a labor of love ; dealing in everything, from the quality of the paper up to the genius, with truly disinterested liberality ; and who, to give only one

instance, must have given Mr. Leech, during his twenty-three years' connection with them, upwards of £ 40,000,—money richly deserved, and well won, for no money could pay in full what he was to them and to us ; but still not the less honorable to them than to him.*

* When the history of the rise and progress of *Punch* comes to be written, it will be found that the Weekly Dinner has been one of the chief things which contributed to its success. Almost from the foundation of that journal it has been the habit of the contributors every Wednesday to dine together. In the winter months, the dinner is usually held in the front room of the first floor of No. 11 Bouverie Street, Whitefriars,—the business offices of the proprietors, Messrs. Bradbury and Evans. Sometimes these dinners are held at the Bedford Hotel, Covent Garden. During the summer months, it is customary to have ten or twelve dinners at places in the neighborhood of London, Greenwich, Richmond, Blackwall, etc. And once a year they

John Leech, we believe remotely of Irish extraction, was a thoroughly London boy,

attend the annual dinner of the firm, at which compositors, readers, printers, machinemen, clerks, etc., dine. This dinner is called the "Way Goose," and is often referred to in *Punch*.

At the weekly dinner the contents of the forthcoming number of *Punch* are discussed. When the cloth is removed, and dessert is laid on the table, the first question put by the editor is, "What shall the Cartoon be?"

During the lifetimes of Jerrold and Thackeray, the discussions after dinner ran very high, owing to the constitutional antipathy existing between these two. Jerrold being the oldest, as well as the noisiest, generally came off victorious. In these rows it required all the suavity of Mark Lemon (and he has a great deal of that quality) to calm the storm; his award always being final.

The third edition of Wednesday's *Sun* is generally brought in to give the latest intelligence, so as to bring the Cartoon down to the latest date. On

though never one whit of a Cockney in nature or look. He was born in 1817, being

the Thursday morning following, the editor calls at the houses of the artists to see what is being done. On Friday night all copy is delivered and put into type, and at two o'clock on Saturday proofs are revised, the forms made up, and with the last movement of the engine, the whole of the type is placed under the press, which cannot be moved until the Monday morning, when the steam is again up. This precaution is taken to prevent waggish tricks on the part of practical joking compositors.

At these dinners none but those connected with the staff proper are permitted to attend ; the only occasional exceptions, we believe, have been Sir Joseph Paxton, Mr. Layard, the present Foreign Under-Secretary, Charles Dickens, and Charles Dickens, junior. As an illustration of the benefit arising from these meetings, we may mention that Jerrold always use to say, "It is no use any of us quarrelling, because next Wednesday must come round with its dinner, when we will all have to

thus six years younger than Thackeray, both of them Charterhouse boys. We rejoice to learn that Lord Russell has, in the kindest way, given to Mr. Leech's eldest boy a presentation to this famous school, where the best men of London birth have so long had their training, as Brougham and Jeffrey, Scott and Cockburn, had at the Edinburgh High School. This gift of our Foreign Minister is twice blessed, and is an act the country may well thank him for.

When between six and seven years of age, some of Leech's drawings were seen by the great Flaxman, and, after carefully looking at them and the boy, he said, "That boy

shake hands again." By means of these meetings, the discussions arising on all questions helped both caricaturist and wit to take a broad view of things, as well as enabled the editor to get his team to draw well together, and give a uniformity of tone to all the contributions.

must be an artist ; he will be nothing else or less." This was said in full consciousness of what is involved in advising such a step. His father wisely, doubtless, thought otherwise, and put him to the medical profession at St. Bartholomew's, under Mr. Stanley. He was very near being sent to Edinburgh, and apprenticed to Sir George Ballingall. If he had come to us then, he would have found one student, since famous, with whom he would have cordialized, — Edward, afterwards Professor Forbes, who to his other great gifts added that of drawing, especially of all sorts of wild, fanciful, elfish pleasantries and freaks, most original and ethereal, and the specimens of which, in their many strange resting-places, it would be worth the while to reproduce in a volume. Leech soon became known among his fellow-students for his lifelike, keen, but always good-natured caricatures ; he was forever drawing. He

never had any regular art-lessons, but his medical studies furnished him with a knowledge of the structure and proportions of the human form, which gives such reality to his drawing ; and he never parades his knowledge, or is its slave ; he values expression ever above mere form, never falsifying, but often neglecting, or rather subordinating, the latter to the former. This intense realism and insight, this pure intense power of observation it is that makes the Greek sculptors so infinitely above the Roman.

We believe the Greeks knew nothing of what was under the skin,—it was considered profane to open the human body and dissect it ; but they studied form and action with that keen, sure, unforgetting, loving eye, that purely realistic faculty, which probably they, as a race, had in more exquisite perfection than any other people before or since. Objective truth they read, and could repeat as

from a book. The Romans, with their hardy, penetrating, audacious nature, — *rerum Domini*, — wanted to know not only what appears, but what is, and what makes appear. They had no misgivings or shyness at cutting into and laying bare their dead fellows, as little as they had in killing them or being themselves killed ; and as so often happens, their strength was their weakness, their pride their fall. They must needs show off their knowledge and their muscles, and therefore they made their statues as if without skin, and put on as violent and often impossible action as ever did Buonarotti. Compare the Laocöon and his boys (small men, rather) with the Elgin marbles ; the riders on the frieze so comely in their going, so lissome ; their skin slipping sweetly over their muscles ; their modestly representing, not of what they know, but of what they see.

In John Leech and Tenniel you see some-

thing of the same contrast : the one knows more than he needs, and shows it accordingly ; the other knowing by instinct, or from good sense, that drawing has only to do with appearances, with things that may be seen, not with things that may be known, drew merely what he saw ; but then with what an inevitable, concentrated eye and hand he did draw that ! This made him so pre-eminent in reproducing the expression of action, — especially intense and rapid action. No knowledge of what muscles were acting, and what are their attachments, etc., could teach a man how a horse trots, or how he gathers himself up to leap, or how a broken-backed cab-horse would lie and look, or even how *Mr. Briggs* — excellent soul — when returning home, gently, and copiously ebriose from Epsom on his *donkey*, would sway about on his podgy legs, when instructing his amazed and ancient groom and friend as to putting

up and rubbing down — *the mare*. But observation such as the Greeks had, that ἀκριβεία, or accuracy, — carefulness, as they called it, — enabled Leech to do all this to the life.

All through his course, more and more, he fed upon Nature, and he had his reward in having perpetually at hand her freshness, her variety, her endlessness. There is a pleasant illustration of this given in a letter in *Notes and Queries* for November 5, 1864 : “On one occasion he and I were riding to town in an omnibus, when an elderly gentleman, in a very peculiar dress, and with very marked features, stepped into the vehicle, and sat down immediately in front of us. He stared so hard and made such wry faces at us, that *I* could hardly refrain from laughter. My discomfiture was almost completed when Leech suddenly exclaimed, ‘By the way, did Prendergast ever show you that

extraordinary account which has been lately forwarded to him ?' and, producing his note-book, added, 'Just run your eye up that column, and tell me what you *can* make of it.' The page was *blank*; but two minutes afterwards the features of that strange old gentleman gaping at us were reflected with lifelike fidelity upon it." There is humor in the choice of the word "Prendergast." This is the true way to nurse invention, to preen and let grow imagination's wings, on which she soars forth into the ideal, "sailing with supreme dominion through the azure depths of air." It is the man who takes in who can give out. The man who does not do the one, soon takes to spinning his own fancies out of his interior, like a spider, and he snares himself at last as well as his victims. It is the bee that makes honey, and it is out of the eater that there comes forth meat, out of the strong that there comes forth sweetness.

In the letter we refer to, which is well worth reading, there is a good remark, that Leech had no mere *minutiæ*, as Turner had none ; everything was subordinated to the main purpose he had ; but he had exquisite *finesse* and delicacy when it was that he wanted. Look at his drawing of our "Jocund Morn," from the boots to the swallows. His pencil-work on wood was marvellous for freedom and loveliness.

The bent of his genius and external causes made him, when about seventeen, give up the study of medicine and go in stoutly and for life for art. His diligence was amazing, as witnessed by the list we give, by no means perfect, of his works ; in *Bentley* they are in multitudes ; and in *Punch* alone, up to 1862, there are more than three thousand separate drawings ! with hardly the vestige of a repetition ; it may be the same tune, but it is a new variation. In nothing is his realistic

power more seen than in those delightful records of his own holidays in *Punch*. A geologist will tell you the exact structure of that rock in the Tay at Campsie Linn, where *Mr. Briggs* is carrying out that huge salmon in his arms, tenderly and safely, as if it were his first-born. All his seascapes, — Scarborough, Folkestone, Biarritz, etc., etc., — any one who has been there does not need to be told their names, and, as we have already said, his men are as native as his rocks, his bathers at Boulogne and Biarritz, his gamekeepers and gillies in Blair-Athole and Lochaber, — you have seen them there, the very men; Duncan Roy is one of them; and those men and women at Galway, in the Claddich, they are liker than themselves, more Irish than the Irish. In this respect his foreigners are wonderful, one of the rarest artistic achievements. Thackeray also could draw a foreigner, — as witness that dreary

woman outworker in the Kickleburys. Mr. Frith can't. Then as to dress ; this was one of the things Leech very early mastered and knew the meaning and power of ; and it is worth mastering, for in it, the dress, is much of the man, both given and received. To see this, look at almost his first large drawing in *Punch*, two months after it started, called "Foreign Affairs." Look, too, at what is still one of his richest works, with all the fervor and abundance, the very dew of his youth, — the *Comic Latin Grammar*. Look at the dress of Menelaus, who threatens to give poor Helen, his wife, "a good hiding." Look at his droll etchings and woodcuts for the otherwise tiresomely brilliant *Comic Histories*, by Gilbert A'Beckett, with their too much puns.

Leech was singularly modest, both as a man and as an artist. This came by nature, and was indicative of the harmony and sweet-

ness of his essence ; but doubtless the perpetual going to Nature, and drawing out of her fulness, kept him humble, as well as made him rich, made him, what every man of sense and power must be, conscious of his own strength ; but before the great mother he was simple and loving, attentive to her lessons, as a child, forever learning and doing.

This honesty and modesty were curiously brought out when he was, after much persuasion, induced to make the colored drawings for that exhibition which was such a splendid success, bringing in nearly £ 5,000. Nothing could induce him to do what was wanted, call them *paintings*. "They are mere sketches," he said, "and very crude sketches too, and I have no wish to be made a laughing-stock by calling them what they are not." Here was at once modesty and honest pride, or rather that truthfulness which lay at the root of his character, and

was also its "bright, consummate flower"; and he went further than this, in having printed in the Catalogue the following words: "These sketches have no claim to be regarded or tested as finished pictures. It is impossible for any one to know the fact better than I do. They have no pretensions to a higher name than that I have given them,—
SKETCHES IN OIL."

We have had, by the kindness of Mr. John Heugh, their possessor, the privilege of having beside us for some time two of the best of those colored sketches, and we feel at once the candor and accuracy of their author's title. It is quite touching the unaccustomedness, the boyish, anxious, laborious workmanship of the practised hand that had done so much, so rapidly and perfectly in another style. They do not make us regret much that he did not earlier devote himself to painting proper, because then what would

have become of these three thousand cuts in *Punch*? But he shows, especially, true powers of landscape painting, a pure and deep sense of distance, translucency, and color, and the power of gleams and shadows on water. His girls are lovelier without color, — have, indeed, “to the eye and prospect of the soul,” a more exquisite bloom, the bloom within the skin, the brightness in the dark eye, all more expressed than in those actually colored. So it often is ; give enough to set the looker-on a-painting, imagining, realizing, bringing up “the shows of things to the desires of the mind,” and no one but the highest painter can paint like that. This is the true office of the masters of all the ideal arts, to evoke, as did the rising sun on Memnon, the sleeping beauty and music and melody of another’s soul, to make every reader a poet, every onlooker an artist, every listener eloquent and tuneful, so be it

that they have the seeing eye, the hearing ear, the loving and understanding heart.

As is well known, this exhibition took London captive. It was the most extraordinary record, by drawing, of the manners and customs and dress of a people ever produced. It was full "from morn to dewy eve," and as full of mirth ; at times this made it like a theatre convulsed as one man by the *vis comica* of one man. The laughter of special, often family groups, broke out opposite each drawing, spread contagiously effervescing throughout, lulling and waxing again and again like waves of the sea. From his reserve, pride, and nicety, Leech could never be got to go when any one was in the room ; he had an especial horror of being what he called "caught and talked at by enthusiastic people." It is worth mentioning here, as it shows his true literary turn as a humorist, and adds greatly to the completeness of his

drawings and of his genius, that all the funny, witty, and often most felicitous titles and wordings of all sorts *were written by himself*; he was most particular about this.

One day a sporting nobleman visited the gallery with his huntsman, whose naïve and knowing criticisms greatly amused his master. At last, coming to one of the favorite hunting pictures, he said, "Ah! my Lord, nothing but a party as knows 'osses cud have draw'd them ere 'unters." The origin and means of these sketches in oil is curious. Mr. Leech had often been asked to undertake works of this character, but he had for so many years been accustomed to draw with the pencil, and that only on small blocks, that he had little confidence in his ability to draw on a large scale. The idea originated with Mr. Mark Lemon, his friend and colleague, who saw that by a new invention — a beautiful piece of machinery — the

impression of a block in *Punch*, being first taken on a sheet of india-rubber, was enlarged ; when, by a lithographic process, the copy thus got could be transferred to the stone, and impressions printed upon a large sheet of canvas. Having thus obtained an outline groundwork consisting of his own lines enlarged some eight times the area of the original block, Leech proceeded to color these. His knowledge of the manipulation of oil-colors was very slight, and it was under the guidance of his friend, John Everett Millais, that his first attempts were made, and crude enough they were. He used a kind of transparent color which allowed the coarse lines of the enlargement to show through, so that the production presented the appearance of indifferent lithographs, slightly tinted. In a short time, however, he obtained great mastery over oil-color, and instead of allowing the thick fatty

lines of printers' ink to remain on the canvas, he, by the use of turpentine, removed the ink, particularly with regard to the lines of the face and figure. These he redrew with his own hand in a fine and delicate manner. To this he added a delicacy of finish, particularly in flesh-color, which greatly enhanced the value and beauty of his later works. To any one acquainted with these sketches, we may mention, for illustration of these remarks, No. 65 in the Catalogue. This work presents all the incompleteness and crudity of his early style. The picture represents *Piscator* seated on a wooden fence on a raw morning in a pelting shower of rain, the lines necessary to give the effect of a leaden atmosphere being very numerous and close. The works which illustrated his later style are best shown in Nos. 36 and 41. In the framing of these sketches he persisted in leaving a margin of white canvas,

somewhat after the manner of water-color sketches.

Of all art satirists none have such a pervading sense and power of girlish and ripe womanly beauty as Leech. Hogarth alone, as in his *Poor Poet's Wife*, comes near him. There is a genuine domesticity about his scenes that could come only from a man who was much at his own fireside, and in the nursery when baby was washed. You see he is himself *paterfamilias*, with no Bohemian taint or raffish turn. What he draws he has seen. What he asks you to live in and laugh at and with, he has laughed at and lived in. It is this wholesomeness, and, to use the right word, this goodness, that makes Leech more than a drawer of funny pictures, more even than a great artist.* It makes him a teacher and

* It is honorable to the regular art of this country that many of its best men early recognized

an example of virtue in its widest sense, from that of manliness to the sweet devotion of woman, and the loving, open mouth and eyes of *parvula* on your knee. How different is the same class of art in France ! you dare not let your wife or girls see their Leech ; he is not for our virgins and boys. Hear what Thackeray says on this point :—

“ Now, while Mr. Leech has been making his comments upon our society and manners, one of the wittiest and keenest observers has been giving a description of his own country of France, in a thousand brilliant pages ; and it is a task not a little amusing and curious for a student of manners to note the

in Leech a true brother. Millais and Elmore and others were his constant *friends* ; and we know that more than twelve years ago Mr. Harvey, now the perspicacious President of the Royal Scottish Academy, wished to make Leech and Thackeray honorary members of that body.

difference between the two satirists, — perhaps between the societies which they describe. Leech's England is a country peopled by noble elderly squires, riding large-boned horses, followed across country by lovely beings of the most gorgeous proportions, by respectful retainers, by gallant little boys emulating the courage and pluck of the sire. The joke is the precocious courage of the child, his gallantry as he charges at his fences, his coolness as he eyes the glass of port or tells grandpapa that he likes his champagne dry. How does Gavarni represent the family-father, the sire, the old gentleman in *his* country, the civilized country? Paterfamilias, in a dyed wig and whiskers, is leering by the side of Mademoiselle Coralie on her sofa in the Rue de Bréda; Paterfamilias, with a mask and a nose half a yard long, is hobbling after her at the ball. The *enfant terrible* is making

Papa and Mamma alike ridiculous by showing us Mamma's lover, who is lurking behind the screen. A thousand volumes are written protesting against the seventh commandment. The old man is forever hunting after the young woman, the wife is forever cheating the husband. The fun of the old comedy never seems to end in France ; and we have the word of their own satirists, novelists, painters of society, that it is being played from day to day.

“In the works of that barbarian artist Hogarth, the subject which affords such playful sport to the civilized Frenchman is stigmatized as a fearful crime, and is visited by a ghastly retribution. The English savage never thinks of such a crime as funny, and, a hundred years after Hogarth, our modern ‘painter of mankind,’ still retains his barbarous modesty, is tender with children, decorous before women, has never once

thought that he had a right or calling to wound the modesty of either.

“ Mr. Leech surveys society from the gentleman’s point of view. In old days, when Mr. Jerrold lived and wrote for that celebrated periodical, he took the other side : he looked up at the rich and great with a fierce, sarcastic aspect, and a threatening posture ; and his outcry or challenge was : ‘ Ye rich and great, look out ! We, the people, are as good as you. Have a care, ye priests, wallowing on the tithe pig, and rolling in carriages and four ; ye landlords grinding the poor ; ye vulgar fine ladies bullying innocent governesses, and what not, — we will expose your vulgarity, we will put down your oppression, we will vindicate the nobility of our common nature,’ and so forth. A great deal is to be said on the Jerrold side ; a great deal was said ; perhaps even a great deal too much. It is not a little curious

to speculate upon the works of these two famous contributors of *Punch*, these two 'preachers,' as the phrase is. 'Woe to you, you tyrant and heartless oppressor of the poor!' calls out Jerrold as Dives's carriage rolls by. 'Beware of the time when your bloated coachman shall be hurled from his box, when your gilded flunky shall be cast to the earth from his perch, and your pampered horses shall run away with you and your vulgar wife, and smash you into ruin. The other philosopher looks at Dives and his cavalcade in his own peculiar manner. He admires the horses, and copies with the most curious felicity their form and action. The footman's calves and powder, the coachman's red face and floss wig, the over-dressed lady and plethoric gentleman in the carriage, he depicts with the happiest strokes; and if there is a pretty girl and a rosy child on the back seat, he 'takes them up tenderly' and

touches them with a hand that has a caress in it. This artist is very tender towards all the little people. It is hard to say whether he loves boys or girls most, — those delightful little men on their ponies in the hunting-fields, those charming little Lady Adas flirting at the juvenile ball ; or Tom the butcher's boy, on the slide ; or ragged little Emly pulling the go-cart freighted with Elizarann and her doll. Steele, Fielding, Goldsmith, Dickens, are similarly tender in their pictures of children. 'We may be barbarians, Monsieur —— ; but even the savages are occasionally kind to their pap-pooes.' When are the holidays ? Mothers of families ought to come to this exhibition and bring the children. Then there are the full-grown young ladies — the very full-grown young ladies—dancing in the ball-room, or reposing by the sea-shore ; the men can peep at whole seraglios of these beauties

for the moderate charge of one shilling, and bring away their charming likenesses in the illustrated catalogue (two-and-six). In the 'Mermaids' Haunt,' for example, there is a siren combing her golden locks, and another dark-eyed witch actually sketching you as you look at her, whom Ulysses could not resist. To walk by the side of the much-sounding sea, and come upon such a bevy of beauties as this, what bliss for a man or a painter! The mermaids in that haunt, haunt the beholder for hours after. Where is the shore on which those creatures were sketched? The sly catalogue does not tell us.

"The outdoor sketcher will not fail to remark the excellent fidelity with which Mr. Leech draws the backgrounds of his little pictures. The homely landscape, the sea, the winter wood by which the huntsmen ride, the light and clouds, the birds floating overhead, are indicated by a few strokes

which show the artist's untiring watchfulness and love of nature. He is a natural truth-teller, and indulges in no flights of fancy, as Hogarth was before him. He speaks his mind out quite honestly, like a thorough Briton. He loves horses, dogs, river and field sports. He loves home and children, that you can see. He holds Frenchmen in light esteem. A bloated 'Mosoo' walking Leicester Square, with a huge cigar and a little hat, with 'billard' and 'estaminet' written on his flaccid face, is a favorite study with him; the unshaven jowl, the waist tied with a string, the boots which pad the Quadrant pavement, this dingy and disreputable being exercises a fascination over Mr. Punch's favorite artist. We trace, too, in his works a prejudice against the Hebrew nation, against the natives of an island much celebrated for its verdure and its wrongs; these are lamentable prejudices indeed, but what man is without his own?

No man has ever depicted the little ‘Snob’ with such a delightful touch. Leech fondles and dandles this creature as he does the children. To remember one or two of those dear gents is to laugh. To watch them looking at their own portraits in this pleasant gallery will be no small part of the exhibition ; and as we can all go and see our neighbors caricatured here, it is just possible that our neighbors may find some smart likenesses of *their* neighbors in these brilliant, lifelike, good-natured sketches in oil.” — *Times*, June 21, 1862.

We could not resist giving this long extract. What perfection of thought and word ! It is, alas ! a draught of a wine we can no more get ; the vine is gone. What flavor in his “dear prisoned spirit of the impassioned grape” ! What a *bouquet* ! Why is not everything that hand ever wrote reproduced ? shall we ever again be regaled with such cœnanthic acid and ether ? — the volatile essences by

which a wine is itself and none other,—its flower and bloom ; the reason why Chamber-tin is not Sherry, and Sauterne neither. Our scientific friends will remember that these same delicate acids and oils are compounds of the lightest of all bodies, hydrogen, and the brightest when concentrated in the diamond, carbon ; and these in the same proportion as sugar ! Moreover, this ethereal oil and acid of wine, what we may call its genius, never exceeds a forty-thousandth part of the wine ! the elevating powers of the fragrant Burgundies are supposed to be more due to this essence than to its amount of alcohol. Thackeray, Jeremy Taylor, Charles Lamb, old Fuller, Sydney Smith, Ruskin, each have the felicity of a specific œnanthic acid and oil, — a bouquet of his own ; others' wines are fruity or dry or brandied, or “from the Cape,” or from the gooseberry, as the case may be. For common household use, commend us to

the stout home-brewed from the Swift, Defoe, Cobbet, and Southey taps.

Much has been said about the annoyance which organ-grinding caused to Leech, but there were other things which also gave him great annoyance, and amongst these was his grievance against the wood-engravers.

His drawings on the polished and chalked surface of the wood-block were beautiful to look at. Great admiration has been bestowed upon the delicacy and artistic feeling shown in the wood-blocks as they appeared in *Punch*; but any one who saw these exquisite little gems as they came from his hands would scarcely recognize the same things when they appeared in print in *Punch*. When he had finished one of his blocks, he would show it to his friends and say, "Look at this, and watch for its appearance in *Punch*." Sometimes he would point to a little beauty in a landscape, and calling particular attention to

it, would say that probably all his fine little touches would be "cut away," in a still more literal sense than that in which he uses the word in his address.

When, however, we come to consider the circumstances and pressure under which these blocks were almost always engraved, the wonder will be that they were so perfect. The blocks upon which he drew were composed of small squares, fastened together at the back, so that when the drawing was completed on the block, it was unscrewed, and the various pieces handed over to a number of engravers, each having a square inch or two of landscape, figure, or face, as the case might be, not knowing what proportion of light and shade each piece bore to the whole.

Had these blocks been carefully and thoughtfully engraved by one hand, and then been printed by the hand instead of the steam press, we might have seen some of the

finesse and beauty which the drawing showed *before* it was "cut away."

There was nothing that was so great a mark of the gentleness of his nature as his steady abstinence from personality. His correspondence was large, and a perusal of it only shows how careful he must have been, to have shunned the many traps that were laid for him to make him a partisan in personal quarrels. Some of the most wonderful suggestions were forwarded to him, but he had a most keen scent for everything in the shape of personality.

We need do little more than allude to the singular purity and good taste manifested in everything he drew or wrote. We do not know any finer instance of blamelessness in art or literature, such perfect delicacy and cleanness of mind, — nothing coarse, nothing having the slightest taint of indecency, no *double entendre*, no laughing at virtue, no

glorifying or glozing of vice,—nothing to make any one of his own lovely girls blush, or his own handsome face hide itself. This gentleness and thorough gentlemanliness pervades all his works. They are done by a man you would take into your family and to your heart at once. To go over his four volumes of *Pictures of Life and Character* is not only a wholesome pleasure and diversion ; it is a liberal education. And then he is not the least of a soft or *goody* man, no small sentimentalism or *petit maître* work : he is a man and an Englishman to the backbone ; who rode and fished as if that were his chief business, took his fences fearlessly, quietly, and mercifully, and knew how to run his salmon and land him. He was, what is better still, a public-spirited man ; a keen, hearty, earnest politician, with strong convictions, a Liberal deserving the name. His political pencillings are as full of good, ener-

getic politics as they are of strong portraiture and drawing. He is almost always on the right side, — sometimes, like his great chief, Mr. Punch, not on the popular one.

From the wonderful fidelity with which he rendered the cabmen and *gamins* of London, we might suppose he had them into his room to sit to him as studies. He never did this ; he liked actions better than states. He was perpetually taking notes of all he saw ; but this was the whole, and a great one. With this, and with his own vivid memory and bright informing spirit, he did it all. One thing we may be pardoned for alluding to as illustrative of his art. His wife, who was every way worthy of him, and without whom he was scarce ever seen at any place of public amusement, was very beautiful ; and the appearance of those lovely English maidens we all so delight in, with their short foreheads, arch looks, and dark laughing eyes,

their innocence and *esprit*, dates from about his marriage. They are all, as it were, *after* her, — her sisters ; and as she grew more matronly, she may still be traced in her mature comeliness and motherly charms. Much of his sketches and their dramatic point are personal experience, as in “Mr. Briggs has a Slate off his House, and the Consequences.” He was not, as indeed might be expected, what is called a funny man. Such a man was Albert Smith, whose absolute levity and funniness became ponderous, serious, and dreary, the crackling of thorns under the pot. Leech had melancholy in his nature, especially in his latter years, when the strain of incessant production and work made his fine organization super-sensitive and apprehensive of coming evil. It was about a year before his death, when in the hunting-field, that he first felt that terrible breast-pang, the last agony of which killed him, as he fell

into his father's arms ; while a child's party, such as he had often been inspired by, and given to us, was in the house. Probably he had by some strain, or sudden muscular exertion, injured the mechanism of his heart. We all remember the shock of his death : how every one felt bereaved, — felt poorer, — felt something gone that nothing could replace, — some one that no one else could follow.

What we owe to him of wholesome, hearty mirth and pleasure, and of something better, good as they are, than either, — purity, affection, pluck, humor, kindliness, good-humor, good feeling, good breeding, the love of nature, of one another, of truth, — the joys of children, the loveliness of our homely English fields, with their sunsets and village spires, their glimpses into the pure infinite beyond, — the sea and all its fulness, its waves “curling their monstrous heads and

hanging them," their crisping smiles on the sunlit sands, — all that variety of nature and of man which is only less infinite than its Maker ; something of this, and of that mysterious quality called humor, that fragrance and flavor of the soul, which God has given us to cheer our lot, to help us to "take heart and hope, and steer right onward," to have our joke, that lets us laugh at and make game of ourselves when we have little else to laugh at or play with, — of that which gives us when we will the silver lining of the cloud, and paints a rainbow on the darkened sky out of our own "troublous tears" ; — something of all these has this great and simple-hearted, hard-working artist given to us and to our children, as a joy and a possession forever. Let us be grateful to him, let us give him our best honor, affection, and regard.

Mr. Leech was tall, strongly but delicately made, graceful, long-limbed, with a grave,

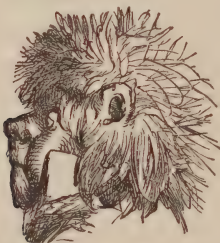
handsome face, a sensitive, gentle mouth, but a mouth that could be "set," deep, penetrating eyes, an open, high, and broad forehead, exquisitely modelled. He looked like his works, — nimble, vigorous, and gentle ; open, and yet reserved ; seeing everything, saying not much ; capable of heartiest mirth, but generally quiet. Once at one of John Parry's wonderful performances, "Mrs. Rose-leaf's Tea-party," when the whole house was in roars, Leech's rich laughter was heard topping them all. There are, as far as we know, only two photographs of him : one — very beautiful, like a perfect English gentleman — by Silvy ; the other more robust and homely, but very good, by Caldesi. We hope there is a portrait of him by his devoted friend Millais, whose experience and thoughts of his worth as a man and as an artist one would give a good deal to have.

When Thackeray wrote the notice of his

sketches in *The Times*, Leech was hugely delighted, — rejoiced in it like a child, and said, “That ’s like putting £1,000 in my pocket.” With all the temptations he had to Club life, he never went to the Garrick to spend the evenings, except on the Saturdays, which he never missed. On Sunday afternoons, in summer, Thackeray and he might often be seen regaling themselves with their fellow-creatures in the Zoölogical Gardens, and making their own queer observations, to which, doubtless, we are indebted for our baby hippopotamus and many another four-footed joke. He never would go to houses where he knew he was asked only to be seen and trotted out. He was not a frequenter of *Mrs. Leo Hunter’s* at homes.

We now give a few typical woodcuts. It is impossible, from the size of our page, to give any of the larger, and often more com-

plete and dramatic drawings. We hope ours will send everybody to the volumes themselves. There should immediately be made, so long as it is possible, a complete collection of his works ; and a noble monument to industry and honest work, as well as genius and goodness, it would be. We begin with the British Lion : —



The State of the Nation. — Disraeli measuring the British
Lion.

This is from a large Cartoon, but we have only space for the British Lion's head. He is dressed as a farm-laborer. He has his hat

and a big stick in his hand, and his tail innocently dragging under his smock-frock, which has the usual elaborate needlework displayed. Disraeli, who is taking his measure for rehabilitating the creature, is about a third shorter, and we would say six times lighter.

What a leonine simpleton ! What a visage ! How much is in it, and how much not ! Look at his shirt-collar and chubby cheek ! What hair ! copious and rank as the son of Manoah's, each particular hair growing straight out into space, and taking its own noway particular way ; his honest, simple eyes, well apart ; his snub, infantile nose ; his long upper lip, unreclaimed as No-man's-land, or the Libyan desert, unstubbed as "Thornaby Waäste" ; his mouth closed, and down at the corner, partly from stomach in discontent (Giles is always dyspeptic), partly from contempt of the same. He is submitting to be measured and taken advan-

tage of behind his back by his Semitic brother. He will submit to this and much more, but not to more than that. He draws his line like other people, when it occurs to him ; and he keeps his line, and breaks yours if you don't look to it.

He may be kicked over, and take it mildly, smiling, it may be, as if he ought somehow to take it well, though appearances are against it. You may even knock him down, and he gets up red and flustered, and with his hands among his hair, and his eyes rounder and brighter, and his mouth more linear, his one leg a little behind the other ; but if you hit him again, calling him a liar or a coward, or his old woman no better than she should be, then he means mischief, and is at it and you. For he is like Judah, a true lion's whelp. Let us be thankful he is so gentle, and can be so fierce and stanch.

Did you ever see such a wind ? How it is



making game of everything ; how everything scuds ! Look at his whiskers. Look at the tail of his descending friend's horse. Look at another's precursory "Lincoln and Bennett" bowling along ! Look at his horse's head, — the jaded but game old mare ; the drawing of her is exquisite ; indeed, there is no end of praising his horses. They are all different, and a dealer could tell you their ages and price, possibly their pedigree.

There is a large woodcut in the *Illustrated London News* (any one who has it should frame it, and put the best plate-glass over it) ; it is called "Very Polite. The party on the gray, having invited some strangers to lunch, shows them the nearest way (by half a mile) to his house." The "party" is a big English squire — sixteen stone at least — with the handsome, insolent face of many of his tribe, and the nose of William the Conqueror. He has put the gray suddenly and

quite close to a hurdle-fence, that nobody but such a man would face, and nothing but such blood and bone could take. He is returning from a "run," and is either ashamed of his guests, and wants to tail them off, or would like to get home and tell his wife that "some beggars" are coming to lunch ; or it may be merely of the nature of a sudden lark, for the escape of his own and his gray's unsatisfied "go." The gray is over it like a bird. The drawing of this horse is marvellous ; it is an action that could only last a fraction of a second, and yet the artist has taken it. Observe the group in the road of the astounded "strangers." There is the big hulking, sulky young cornet, "funking," as it is technically called ; our friend Tom Noddy behind him, idiotic and ludicrous as usual, but going to go at it like a man such as he is, — the wintry elms, the big hedger at his work on his knees, — all done to the



“ And jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mounchain-tops.”

quick. But the finest bit of all is the eye of the mare. She knows well it is a short cut home ; and her cheery, fearless, gentle eye is keenly fixed, not on where she is about to land, — that's all right, — but on the distance, probably her own stable belfry. This woodcut is very valuable, and one of the largest he ever did.

How arch ! how lovely ! how maidenly in this their “sweet hour of prime” the two conspirators* are ! What a clever bit of composition ! how workmanlike the rustic seat ! how jauntily the approaching young swells are bearing down upon them, keeping time with their long legs ! you know how they will be chaffing all together in a minute ; what ringing laughs !

And is not she a jocund *morn* ? day is too old for her. She is in “the first garden of her simpleness,” — in “the innocent bright-

* See frontispiece.

ness of her new-born day." How plumb she stands ! How firm these dainty heels ! — leaning forward just a little on the wind ; her petticoat, a mere hint of its wee bit of scolloped work, done by herself, doubtless ; the billowy gown ; the modest little *soupçon* of the white silk stockings, anybody else would have shown none, or too much ; the shadow of puffing papa approaching to help her down ; the wonderful sense of air and space. The only thing we question is, Would papa's hat's shadow show the rim *across*, instead of only at the sides ?

This belongs to a set of drawings made when down in Staffordshire, his wife's county. They are all full of savage strength. They show how little he drew from fancy, and how much from nature, memory, and invention proper, which, as does also true imagination, postulate a foundation in materials and fact. A mere Cockney, — whose idea of a rough



BIT FROM THE MINING DISTRICTS.

First. W'nt tak' thy quoad off, then! Oi tell thee oi'm as good a mon as thee!

Second. Thee a mon! Whoy, thou be'est only walk-in' aboot to save thy funeral expenses.

was that of a London ruffian, — would have put Staffordshire clothes on the Bill Sykes he may have seen in the flesh or more likely on the stage, and that would be all : Leech gives you the essence, the clothes, and the county. Look at these two fellows, brutal as their own bull-dogs and as stanch, — having their own virtues too, in a way, — what a shoulder, what a deltoid and biceps ! the upper man developed largely by generations of arm work, the legs well enough, but not in proportion, — their education having been neglected. Contrast these men with Leech's Highlandmen in *Briggs' Salmon and Grouse Adventures* : there matters are reversed, because so are the conditions of growth. A Staffordshire upper-man on Rannoch or Liddesdale legs would be an ugly customer. Observe the pipe fallen round from the mouth's action in speaking, and see how the potteries are indicated by the smoking brick cupola.

This is delicious ! What comic *vis* ! Pluck and perspiration ! bewilderment and bottom ! He'll be at it again presently, give him time. This is only one of the rounds, and the boot-hooks are ready for the next. Look at the state of his back-hair, his small, determined eye ! the braces burst with the stress ! The affair is being done in some remote, solitary room. The hat is ready, looking at him, and so are the spurs and the other boot, standing bolt upright and impossible ; but he'll do it ; apoplexy and asphyxia may be imminent ; but doubtless these are the very boots he won the steeplechase in. A British lion this too, not to be "done," hating that *bête* of a word "impossible" as much as Bonaparte did, and as Briggs does him. We have an obscure notion, too, that he has put the wrong foot into the boot ; never mind.

The character of *Mr. Briggs*, throughout all predicaments in *Punch*, is, we think, better



sustained, more real, more thoroughly respectable and comic, than even Mr. Pickwick's. Somehow, though the latter worthy is always very delightful and like himself when he is with us, one does n't know what becomes of him the rest of the day ; and if he was asked to *be*, we fear he could n't live through an hour, or do anything for himself. He is for the stage. *Briggs* is a man you have seen, — he is a man of business, of sense, and energy ; a good husband and citizen, a true Briton and Christian, peppery, generous, plucky, obstinate, faithful to his spouse and bill ; only he has this craze about hunting and sport in general.

This is from the *Little Tour in Ireland*, in which, by the by, is one of the only two drawings he ever made of himself, — at page 141 ; it is a back view of him, riding with very short stirrups a rakish Irish pony ; he is in the Gap of Dunloe, and listening to a bare-

footed master of blarney. The other likeness is in a two-page Cartoon, — “ Mr. Punch’s Fancy Ball,” January, 1847. In the orchestra are the men on the *Punch* staff at the time. The first on the left is Mayhew, playing the cornet, then Percival Leigh the double bass, Gilbert A’Beckett the violin, Doyle the clarionette, Leech next playing the same, — tall, handsome, and nervous, — Mark Lemon, the editor, as conductor, appealing to the fell Jerrold to moderate his bitter transports on the drum. Mooning over all is Thackeray, — big, vague, childlike, — playing on the piccolo ; and Tom Taylor earnestly pegging away at the piano. What a change from such a fancy to this sunset and moonrise on the quiet, lonely Connemara Bay, — nothing living is seen but the great winged sea-bird flapping his way home, close to the “ charmed wave.” The whole scene radiant, sacred, and still ; “ the gleam, the shadow, and the peace



supreme." The man who could feel this, and make us feel it, had the soul and the hand of a great painter.

This speaks for itself. Nobody needs to be told which is Freddy ; and you see the book from which Arthur got his views of Genesis and the mystery of being ; and the motherly, tidy air of the beds ! Freddy's right thumb in his belt ; the artistic use of that mass of white beyond his head ; the drawing of his right sole ; the tremendous bit of theology in that "only," — do any of us know much more about it now than does Arthur ? — only surely nobody would now say, according to Pet Marjory's brother, that our Arthur, as he now sits, clean and caller, all tucked up in his nightgown, — made of soft cotton, thick and (doubtless) tweeled, — and ready for any amount of discussion, is only "dirt." *

* This word, in conjunction with children, brings into our mind a joke which happened to Dr. Nor-

We have said he was greater in humor than in caricature or even satire, and, like all true humorists, he had the tragic sense and

man M'Leod, and which he tells as only he can tell his own stories. He was watching some barelegged Glasgow street children who were busied in a great mud-work in the kennel. "What's that?" said he, stooping down. "It's a kirk," said they, never looking up. "Where's the door?" "There's the door," points a forefinger, that answers young Fleming's account of the constitution of man. "Where's the steeple?" "There's the steeple," — a defunct spunk slightly off the perpendicular. "Where's the poopit?" "There's the poopit," said the biggest, his finger making a hole in a special bit of clay he had been fondly rounding in his palms. "And where's the minister?" "O, ye see," looking as vacant as a congregation in such circumstances should, and as the hole did when he withdrew his finger, "*Ou're run oot o' dirt;*" but jumping up, and extinguishing for the time, with his bare foot, the entire back gallery, he exclaims,



A MORAL LESSON FROM THE NURSERY.

Arthur. Do you know, Freddy, that we are only made of dust?

Freddy. Are we? Then I'm sure we ought to be very careful how we pitch into each other so, for fear we might crumble each other all to pieces.



power ; for as is the height so is the depth, as is the mirth so is the melancholy ; Loch Lomond is deepest when Ben dips into it. Look at this. Mr. Merryman and his dead

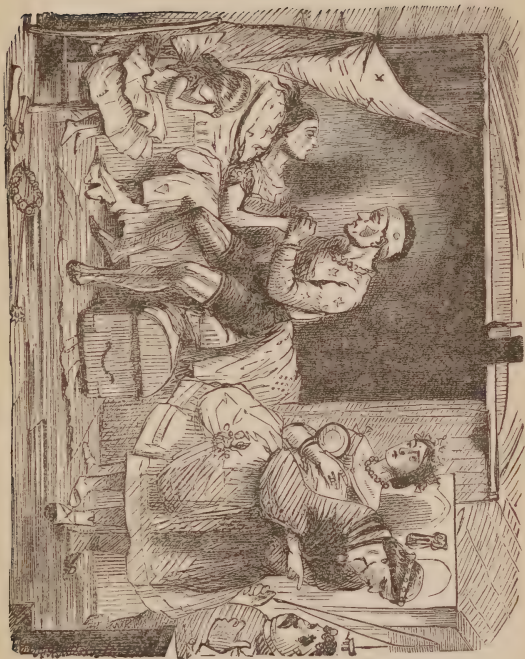
“ There ’s Airchie comin’, he’s got a bit.” Airchie soon converted his dirt into a minister, who was made round, and put into his hole, the gallery repaired, and the “ call ” vociferously unanimous and “ sustained.” Would n’t that jovial piece of professional “ dirt ” chew his cud of droll fancies as he walked off, from the fall of man to the Aberdeen Act, and the entire subject of dirt.

“ Where did Adam fall ? ” said his kindly old minister to “ Wee Peter ” at the examination. “ Last nicht, at the close-mooth, sir ” (Adam, like his old namesake, was in the way of frequenting a certain forbidden tree, his was “ The Lemon Tree,” — it was in Aberdeen), “ and he’s a’ *glaur* yet,” (*glaur* being *Scottice et Scotorum*, wet dirt). “ Ay, ay, my wee man,” said the benevolent Calvinist, patting his head, “ he’s a’ *glaur* yet, — he’s a’ *glaur* yet.”

wife, — there is nothing in Hogarth more tragic and more true. It is a travelling circus ; its business at its height ; the dying woman has just made a glorious leap through the papered hoop ; the house is still ringing with the applause ; she fell and was hurt cruelly ; but, saying nothing, crept into this caravan room ; she has been prematurely delivered, and is now dead ; she had been begging her Bill to come near her, and to hear her last words ; Bill has kissed her, taken her to his heart, — and she is gone. Look into this bit of misery and nature ; look at her thin face, white as the waning moon

“ Stranded on the pallid shore of morn ” ;

the women’s awe-stricken, pitiful looks (the great Gomersal, with his big blue-black unwhiskered cheek, his heavy mustache, his business-like, urgent thumb, — even he is being solemnized and hushed) ; the trunk



pulled out for the poor baby's clothes secretly prepared at by-hours by the poor mother ; the neatly mended tear in Mary's frock ; the coronet, the slippers, the wand with its glittering star ; the nearness of the buzzing multitude ; the dignity of death over the whole. We do not know who "S. H." is, who tells, with his strong simplicity, the story of "The Queen of the Arena," — it is in the first volume of *Once a Week*, — but we can say nothing less of it than that it is worthy of this woodcut ; it must have been true. Here, too, as in all Leech's works, there is a manly sweetness, an overcoming of evil by good, a gentleness that tames the anguish ; you find yourself taking off your shoes, and bow as in the presence of the Supreme, — who gives, who takes away, — who restores the lost.*

* We remember many years ago, in St. Andrews, on the fair-day in September, standing before a

We end as we began, by being thankful for our gift of laughter, and for our makers of the same, for the pleasant joke, for the

show, where some wonderful tumbling and music and dancing was being done. It was called by way of *The Tempest*, a ballet, and *Miranda* was pirouetting away all glorious with her crown and rouge and tinsel. She was young, with dark, wild, rich eyes and hair, and shapely, tidy limbs. The Master of ceremonies, a big fellow of forty, with an honest, merry face, was urging the young lady to do her best, when suddenly I saw her start, and thought I heard a child's cry in the midst of the rough music. She looked eagerly at the big man, who smiled, made her jump higher than ever, at the same time winking to some one within. Up came the bewitching *Ferdinand*, glorious, too, but old and ebriose ; and under cover of a fresh round of cheers from the public, *Miranda* vanished. Presently the cry stopped, and the big man smiled again, and thumped his drum more fiercely. I stepped out of the crowd, and getting to the end of

mirth that heals and heartens, and never wounds, that assuages and diverts. This, like all else, is a gift from the Supreme Giver, to be used as not abused, to be kept in its proper place, neither despised nor estimated and cultivated overmuch ; for it has its perils as well as its pleasures, and is not always, as in this case, on the side of truth and virtue, modesty and sense. If you wish to know from a master of the art what are the dangers of giving one's self too much up

the caravan, peered through a broken panel. There was our gum-flower-crowned *Miranda* sitting beside a cradle, on an old regimental drum, with her baby at her breast. O how lovely, how blessed, how at peace they looked, how all in all to each other ! and the fat handy-pandy patting its plump, snowy, unfailing friend ; it was like Hagar and young Ishmael by themselves. I learned that the big man was her husband, and used her well in his own gruff way.

to the comic view of things, how it demoralizes the whole man, read what we have already earnestly commended to you, Sydney Smith's two lectures, in which there is something quite pathetic in the earnestness with which he speaks of the snares and the degradations that mere wit, comicality, and waggery bring upon the best of men. We end with his concluding words : —

“ I have talked of the *danger* of wit and humor : I do not mean by that to enter into commonplace declamation against faculties because they *are* dangerous. Wit is dangerous, eloquence is dangerous, a talent for observation is dangerous, *every* thing is dangerous that has efficacy and vigor for its characteristics ; nothing is safe but mediocrity. The business is in conducting the understanding well, to risk something ; to aim at uniting things that are commonly incompatible. The meaning of an extraordi-

nary man is, that he is *eight* men, not one man ; that he has as much wit as if he had no sense, and as much sense as if he had no wit ; that his conduct is as judicious as if he were the dullest of human beings, and his imagination as brilliant as if he were irretrievably ruined. But when wit is combined with sense and information ; when it is softened by benevolence, and restrained by strong principle ; when it is in the hands of a man who can use it and despise it, who can be witty and something much *better* than witty, who loves honor, justice, decency, goodness, morality, and religion ten thousand times better than wit, — wit is *then* a beautiful and delightful part of our nature. There is no more interesting spectacle than to see the effects of wit upon the different characters of men ; than to observe it expanding caution, relaxing dignity, unfreezing coldness, — teaching age and care and pain to

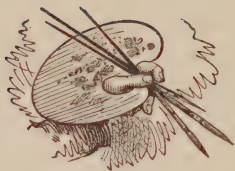
smile, — extorting reluctant gleams of pleasure from melancholy, and charming even the pangs of grief. It is pleasant to observe how it penetrates through the coldness and awkwardness of society, gradually bringing men nearer together, and, like the combined force of wine and oil, giving every man a glad heart and a shining countenance. *Genuine and innocent wit and humor like this is surely the flavor of the mind ! Man could direct his ways by plain reason, and support his life by tasteless food ; but God has given us wit, and flavor, and brightness, and laughter, and perfumes, to enliven the days of man's pilgrimage, and to ' charm his pained steps over the burning marle.' "*





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CAREER.









THACKERAY'S LITERARY CAREER.

THAT Mr. Thackeray was born in India in 1811; that he was educated at Charter House and Cambridge; that he left the University after a few terms' residence without a degree; that he devoted himself at first to art; that in pursuit thereof he lived much abroad "for study, for sport, for society"; that about the age of twenty-five, married, without fortune, without a profession, he began the career which has made him an English classic; that he pursued that career steadily till his death, — all this has, within the last few weeks, been told again and again.

It is a common saying that the lives of men of letters are uneventful. In an obvious sense this is true. They are seldom called on to take part in events which move the world, in politics, in the conflicts of nations; while the exciting incidents of sensation-novels are as rare in their lives as in the

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lives of other men. But men of letters are in no way exempt from the changes and chances of fortune; and the story of these, and of the effects which came from them, must possess an interest for all. Prosperity succeeded by cruel reverses; happiness, and the long prospect of it, suddenly clouded; a hard fight, with aims as yet uncertain, and powers unknown; success bravely won; the austerer victory of failure manfully borne, — these things make a life truly eventful, and make the story of that life full of interest and instruction. They will all fall to be narrated when Mr. Thackeray's life shall be written; we have only now to do with them so far as they illustrate his literary career, of which we propose to lay before our readers an account as complete as is in our power, and as impartial as our warm admiration for the great writer we have lost will allow.

Many readers know Mr. Thackeray only as the Thackeray of *Vanity Fair*, *Pendennis*, *The Newcomes*, and *The Virginians*, the quadrilateral of his fame, as they were called by the writer of an able and kindly notice in the *Illustrated News*. The four volumes of *Miscellanies* published in 1857, though his reputation had been then established, are less known than they should be. But Mr. Thackeray wrote much which does not appear even in the *Miscellanies*; and some account of his early labors may not be unacceptable to our readers.

His first attempt was ambitious. He became connected as editor, and also, we suspect, in some measure, as proprietor, with a weekly literary journal, the fortunes of which were not prosperous. We believe the journal to have been one which bore the imposing title of "The National Standard and Journal of Literature, Science, Music, Theatricals, and the Fine Arts." Thackeray's editorial reign began about the 19th Number, after which he seems to have done a good deal of work, — reviews, letters, criticisms, and verses. As the *National Standard* is now hardly to be met with out of the British Museum, we give a few specimens of these first efforts. There is a mock sonnet by W. Wordsworth, illustrative of a drawing of Braham in stage nautical costume, standing by a theatrical sea-shore; in the background an Israelite, with the clothes-bag and triple hat of his ancient race; and in the sky, constellation-wise, appears a Jew's harp, with a chaplet of bays round it. The sonnet runs: —

Say not that Judah's harp hath lost its tone,
Or that no bard hath found it where it hung
Broken and lonely, voiceless and unstrung,
Beside the sluggish streams of Babylon:
Slowman * repeats the strains his father sung,

* "It is needless to speak of the eminent vocalist and improvisatore. He nightly delights a numerous and respectable audience at the Cider Cellar; and while on this subject, I cannot refrain from mentioning the kindness of Mr. Evans, the worthy proprietor of that establishment. N. B. — A *table d'hôte* every Friday. — W. WORDSWORTH."

And Judah's burning lyre is Braham's own!
 Behold him here! Here view the wondrous man,
 Majestical and lonely, as when first,
 In music on a wondering world he burst,
 And charmed the ravished ears of Sov'reign Anne.*
 Mark well the form, O reader! nor deride
 The sacred symbol — Jew's harp glorified —
 Which, circled with a blooming wreath, is seen
 Of verdant bays; and thus are typified
 The pleasant music, and the haize of green,
 Whence issues out at eve Braham with front serene."

We have here the germ of a style in which Thackeray became famous, though the humor of attributing this nonsense to Wordsworth, and of making Braham coeval with Queen Anne, is not now very plain. There is a yet more characteristic touch in a review of Montgomery's "Woman the Angel of Life," winding up with a quotation of some dozen lines, the order of which he says has been reversed by the printer, but as they read quite as well the one way as the other, he does not think it worth while to correct the mistake! A comical tale, called the "Devil's Wager," afterwards reprinted in the *Paris Sketch-Book*, also appeared in the *National Standard*, with a capital woodcut, representing the Devil as sailing through the air, dragging after him the fat Sir Roger de Rollo by means of his tail, which is wound round Sir Roger's neck. The idea of this tale is characteristic. The venerable knight,

* "Mr. Braham made his first appearance in England in the reign of Queen Anne. — W. W."

already in the other world, has made a foolish bet with the Devil involving very seriously his future prospects there, which he can only win by persuading some of his relatives on earth to say an Ave for him. He fails to obtain this slight boon from a kinsman successor for obvious reasons; and from a beloved niece, owing to a musical lover whose serenading quite puts a stop to her devotional exercises; and succeeds at last, only when, giving up all hope from compassion or generosity, he appeals by a pious fraud to the selfishness of a brother and a monk. The story ends with a very Thackerean touch: "The moral of this story will be given in several successive numbers"; the last three words are in the Sketch-Book changed into "the second edition."

Perhaps best of all is a portrait of Louis Philippe, presenting the Citizen King under the Robert Macaire aspect, the adoption and popularity of which Thackeray so carefully explains and illustrates in his Essay on "Caricatures and Lithography in Paris." Below the portrait are these lines, not themselves very remarkable, but in which, especially in the allusion to Snobs by the destined enemy of the race, we catch glimpses of the future: —

"Like 'the king in the parlor' he's fumbling his money,
Like 'the queen in the kitchen' his speech is all honey,
Except when he talks it, like Emperor Nap,
Of his wonderful feats at Fleurus and Jemappe;
But alas! all his zeal for the multitude's gone,
And of no numbers thinking except Number One!

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No huzzas greet his coming, no patriot club licks
The hand of 'the best of created republics':
He stands in Paris, as you see him before ye,
Little more than a snob. That 's an end of the story."

The journal seems to have been an attempt to substitute vigorous and honest criticism of books and of art for the partiality and slipslop general then, and now not perhaps quite unknown. It failed, however, partly, it may be, from the inexperience of its managers, but doubtless still more from the want of the capital necessary to establish anything of the sort in the face of similar journals of old standing. People get into a habit of taking certain periodicals unconsciously, as they take snuff. *The National Standard*, etc., etc., came into existence on the 5th January, 1833, and ceased to be on the 1st February, 1834.

His subsequent writings contain several allusions to this misadventure; from some of which we would infer that the breakdown of the journal was attended with circumstances more unpleasant than mere literary failure. Mr. Adolphus Simcoe * (*Punch*, Vol.

* The portrait of Mr. Adolphus, stretched out, "careless diffused,"—seedy, hungry, and diabolical, in his fashionable cheap hat, his dirty white duck trousers strapped tightly down, as being the mode and possibly to conceal his bare legs; a half-smoked, probably unsmokable cigar, in his hand, which is lying over the arm of a tavern bench, from whence he is casting a greedy and ruffian eye upon some unseen fellows, supping plenteously and with cheer,—is, for power and drawing, not unworthy of Hogarth.

III.), when in a bad way from a love of literature and drink, completed his ruin by purchasing and conducting for six months that celebrated miscellany called the *Lady's Lute*, after which time "its chords were rudely snapped asunder, and he who had swept them aside with such joy went forth a wretched and heart-broken man." And in *Lovel the Widower*, Mr. Batchelor narrates similar experiences : —

"I dare say I gave myself airs as editor of that con-founded *Museum*, and proposed to educate the public taste, to diffuse morality and sound literature throughout the nation, and to pocket a liberal salary in return for my services. I dare say I printed my own sonnets, my own tragedy, my own verses (to a being who shall be nameless, but whose conduct has caused a faithful heart to bleed not a little). I dare say I wrote satirical articles, in which I piqued myself on the fineness of my wit and criticisms, got up for the nonce, out of encyclopædias and biographical dictionaries ; so that I would be actually astonished at my own knowledge. I dare say I made a gaby of myself to the world ; pray, my good friend, hast thou never done likewise ? If thou hast never been a fool, be sure thou wilt never be a wise man."

Silence for a while seems to have followed upon this failure ; but in 1836 his first attempt at independent authorship appeared simultaneously at London and Paris. This publication, at a time when he still hoped to make his bread by art, is, like indeed everything he either said or did, so characteristic, and has been so utterly forgotten, that an ac-


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count of it may not be out of place, perhaps more minute than its absolute merits deserve.

It is a small folio, with six lithographs, slightly tinted, entitled *Flore et Zephyr, Ballet Mythologique dédié à — par Théophile Wagstaffe*. Between “à” and “par” on the cover is the exquisite *Flore* herself, all alone in some rosy and bedizened bower. She has the old jaded smirk, and, with eyebrows up and eyelids dropt, she is looking down oppressed with modesty and glory. Her nose, which is long, and has a ripe droop, gives to the semicircular smirk of the large mouth, down upon the centre of which it comes in the funniest way, an indescribably sentimental absurdity. Her thin, sinewy arms and large hands are crossed on her breast, and her petticoat stands out like an inverted white tulip — of muslin — out of which come her professional legs, in the only position which human nature never puts its legs into; it is her special *pose*. Of course, also, you are aware, by that smirk, that look of being looked at, that though alone in maiden meditation in this her bower, and sighing for her *Zephyr*, she is in front of some thousand pairs of eyes, and under the fire of many double-barrelled lorgnettes, of which she is the focus.

In the first place, *La Danse fait ses offrandes sur l'autel de l'harmonie*, in the shapes of *Flore* and *Zephyr* coming trippingly to the footlights, and paying no manner of regard to the altar of harmony,

represented by a fiddle with an old and dreary face, and a laurel-wreath on its head, and very great regard to the unseen but perfectly understood "house." Next is *Triste et abattu, les séductions des Nymphes le* (Zephyr) *tentent en vain*, Zephyr looking theatrically sad. Then *Flore* (with one lower extremity at more than a right angle to the other) *déplore l'absence de Zephyr*. The man in the orchestra endeavoring to combine business with pleasure, so as to play the flageolet and read his score, and at the same time miss nothing of the deploring, is intensely comic. Next Zephyr has his turn, and *dans un pas seul exprime sa suprême désespoir*, — the extremity of despair being expressed by doubling one leg so as to touch the knee of the other, and then whirling round so as to suggest the regulator of a steam-engine run off. Next is the rapturous reconciliation, when the faithful creature bounds into his arms, and is held up to the house by the waist in the wonted fashion. Then there is *La Retraite de Flore*, where we find her with her mother and two admirers, — Zephyr, of course, not one. This is in Thackeray's strong, unflinching line. One lover is a young dandy without forehead or chin, sitting idiotically astride his chair. To him the old lady, who has her slight rouge, too, and is in a homely shawl and muff, having walked, is making faded love. In the centre is the fair darling herself, still on tiptoe, and wrapped up, but not too much, for

her *fiacre*. With his back to the comfortable fire, and staring wickedly at her, is the other lover, a big, burly, elderly man, probably well to do on the Bourse, and with a wife and family at home in their beds. The last exhibits *Les délassements de Zephyr*. That hard-working and homely personage is resting his arm on the chimney-piece, taking a huge pinch of snuff from the box of a friend, with a refreshing expression of satisfaction, the only bit of nature as yet. A dear little innocent pot-boy, such as only Thackeray knew how to draw, is gazing and waiting upon the two, holding up a tray from the nearest tavern, on which is a great pewter-pot of foaming porter for Zephyr, and a runner of steaming brandy and water for his friend, who has come in from the cold air. These drawings are lithographed by Edward Morton, son of "Speed the Plough," and are done with that delicate strength and truth for which this excellent but little known artist is always to be praised. In each corner is the monogram , which appears so often afterwards with the M added, and is itself superseded by the well-known pair of spectacles. Thackeray must have been barely five-and-twenty when this was published by Mitchell in Bond Street. It can hardly be said to have sold.

Now it is worth noticing how in this, as always, he ridiculed the ugly and the absurd in truth and

pureness. There is, as we may well know, much that is wicked (though not so much as the judging community are apt to think) and miserable in such a life. There is much that a young man and artist might have felt and drawn in depicting it, of which in after years he would be ashamed; but "Théophile Wagstaffe" has done nothing of this. The effect of looking over these *juvenilia* — these first shafts from that mighty bow, now, alas! unbent — is good, is moral; you are sorry for the hard-wrought slaves; perhaps a little contemptuous towards the idle people who go to see them; and you feel, moreover, that the *Ballet*, as thus done, is ugly as well as bad, is stupid as well as destructive of decency.

His dream of editorship being ended, Mr. Thackeray thenceforward contented himself with the more lowly, but less responsible, position of a contributor, especially to *Fraser's Magazine*. The youth of *Fraser* was full of vigor and genius. We know no better reading than its early volumes, unsparing indeed, but brilliant with scholarship and originality and fire. In these days, the staff of that periodical included such men as Maginn, "Barry Cornwall," Coleridge, Carlyle, Hogg, Galt, Theodore Hook, Delta, Gleig, Edward Irving, and, now among the greatest of them all, Thackeray. The first of the *Yellowplush Correspondence* appeared in November, 1837. The world should be grateful to Mr. John Henry Skelton, who in that year wrote a book

called *My Book, or the Anatomy of Conduct*, for to him is owing the existence of Mr. Charles Yellowplush as a critic, and as a narrator of "fashionable fax and polite annygoats." Mr Yellowplush, on reading Mr. Skelton's book, saw at once that only a gentleman of his distinguished profession could competently criticise the same; and this was soon succeeded by the wider conviction that the great subject of fashionable life should not be left to any "common writin creatures," but that an authentic picture thereof must be supplied by "ONE OF US." In the words of a note to the first paper, with the initials O. Y., but which it is easy to recognize as the work of Mr. Charles himself without the plush: "He who looketh from a tower sees more of the battle than the knights and captains engaged in it; and, in like manner, he who stands behind a fashionable table knows more of society than the guests who sit at the board. It is from this source that our great novel-writers have drawn their experience, retailing the truths which they learned. It is not impossible that Mr. Yellowplush may continue his communications, when we shall be able to present the reader with the only authentic picture of fashionable life which has been given to the world in our time." The idea was not carried out very fully. The only pictures sketched by Mr. Yellowplush were the farce of "Miss Shum's Husband" and the terrible tragedy of "Deuceace,"

neither of them exactly "pictures of fashionable life." We rather fancy that, in the story of Mr. Deuceace, Mr. Yellowplush was carried away from his original plan, a return to which he found impossible after that wonderful medley of rascality, grim humor, and unrelieved bedevilry of all kinds. But in 1838 he reverted to his original critical tendencies, and demolished all that *The Quarterly* had left of a book which made some noise in its day, called *A Diary Illustrative of the Times of George the Fourth*; and wrote from his pantry one of the "Epistles to the Literati," expressing his views of Sir Edward Lytton's *Sea Captain*, than which we know of no more good-natured, trenchant, and conclusive piece of criticism. All the Yellowplush papers except the first are republished in the *Miscellanies*.

In 1839 appeared the story of *Catherine*, by Ikey Solomon. This story is little known, and it throws us back upon one still less known. In 1832, when Mr. Thackeray was not more than twenty-one, *Elizabeth Brownrigge: a Tale*, was narrated in the August and September numbers of *Fraser*. This tale is dedicated to the author of *Eugene Aram*, and the author describes himself as a young man who has for a length of time applied himself to literature, but entirely failed in deriving any emoluments from his exertions. Depressed by failure he sends for the popular novel of *Eugene Aram* to

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gain instruction therefrom. He soon discovers his mistake : —

“From the frequent perusal of older works of imagination I had learnt so to weave the incidents of my story as to interest the feelings of the reader in favor of virtue, and to increase his detestation of vice. I have been taught by *Eugene Aram* to mix vice and virtue up together in such an inextricable confusion as to render it impossible that any preference should be given to either, or that the one, indeed, should be at all distinguishable from the other. . . . In taking my subject from the walk of life to which you had directed my attention, many motives conspired to fix my choice on the heroine of the ensuing tale ; she is a classic personage, — her name has been already ‘linked to immortal verse’ by the muse of Canning. Besides, it is extraordinary that, as you had commenced a tragedy under the title of *Eugene Aram*, I had already sketched a burletta with the title of *Elisabeth Brownrigge*. I had, indeed, in my dramatic piece, been guilty of an egregious and unpardonable error : I had attempted to excite the sympathies of the audience in favor of the murdered apprentices, but your novel has disabused me of so vulgar a prejudice, and, in my present version of her case, all the interest of the reader and all the pathetic powers of the author will be engaged on the side of the murderess.”

According to this conception the tale proceeds, with incidents and even names taken directly from the *Newgate Calendar*, but rivalling *Eugene Aram* itself in magnificence of diction, absurdity of sentiment, and pomp of Greek quotation. The trial scene and the speech for the defence are especially well hit off. If *Elisabeth Brownrigge* was written by Thackeray, and the internal evidence seems to

us strong, the following is surprising criticism from a youth of twenty-one, — the very Byron and Bulwer age: —

“I am inclined to regard you (the author of *Eugene Aram*) as an original discoverer in the world of literary enterprise, and to reverence you as the father of a new ‘*lusus nature* school.’ There is no other title by which your manner could be so aptly designated. I am told, for instance, that in a former work, having to paint an adulterer, you described him as belonging to the class of country curates, among whom, perhaps, such a criminal is not met with once in a hundred years; while, on the contrary, being in search of a tender-hearted, generous, sentimental, high-minded hero of romance, you turned to the pages of the *Newgate Calendar*, and looked for him in the list of men who have cut throats for money, among whom a person in possession of such qualities could never have been met with at all. Wanting a shrewd, selfish, worldly, calculating valet, you describe him as an old soldier, though he bears not a single trait of the character which might have been moulded by a long course of military service, but, on the contrary, is marked by all the distinguishing features of a bankrupt attorney, or a lame duck from the Stock Exchange. Having to paint a cat, you endow her with the idiosyncrasies of a dog.”

At the end, the author intimates that he is ready to treat with any liberal publisher for a series of works in the same style, to be called *Tales of the Old Bailey, or Romances of Tyburn Tree*. The proposed series is represented only by *Catherine*, a longer and more elaborate effort in the same direction. It is the narrative of the misdeeds of Mrs. Catherine Hayes, — an allusion to whose criminal-

ity in after days brought down upon the author of *Pendennis* an amusing outpouring of fury from Irish patriotism, forgetting in its excitement that the name was borne by a heroine of the *Newgate Calendar*, as well as by the accomplished singer whom we all regret. The purpose of *Catherine* is the same as that of *Elisabeth Brownrigge*, — to explode the *lusus naturæ* school; but the plan adopted is slightly different. Things had got worse than they were in 1832. The public had called for coarse stimulants and had got them. *Jack Sheppard* had been acquiring great popularity in *Bentley's Miscellany*; and the true feeling and pathos of many parts of *Oliver Twist* had been marred by the unnatural sentimentalism of Nancy. Mr. Ikey Solomon objected utterly to these monstrosities of literature, and thought the only cure was a touch of realism; an attempt to represent blackguards in some measure as they actually are: —

“In this,” he says, “we have consulted nature and history rather than the prevailing taste and the general manner of authors. The amusing novel of *Ernest Maltravers*, for instance, opens with a seduction; but then it is performed by people of the strictest virtue on both sides; and there is so much religion and philosophy in the heart of the seducer, so much tender innocence in the soul of the seduced, that — bless the little dears! — their very peccadilloes make one interested in them; and their naughtiness becomes quite sacred, so deliciously is it described. Now, if we are to be interested by rascally actions, let us have them with plain faces, and let them be performed, not by virtuous philoso-

phers, but by rascals. Another clever class of novelists adopt the contrary system, and create interest by making their rascals perform virtuous actions. Against these popular plans we here solemnly appeal. We say, let your rogues in novels act like rogues, and your honest men like honest men; don't let us have any juggling and thimblerrigging with virtue and vice, so that, at the end of three volumes, the bewildered reader shall not know which is which; don't let us find ourselves kindling at the generous qualities of thieves and sympathizing with the rascalities of noble hearts. For our own part, we know what the public likes, and have chosen rogues for our characters, and have taken a story from the *Newgate Calendar*, which we hope to follow out to edification. Among the rogues at least, we will have nothing that shall be mistaken for virtue. And if the British public (after calling for three or four editions) shall give up, not only our rascals, but the rascals of all other authors, — we shall be content. We shall apply to government for a pension, and think that our duty is done."

Again, further on in the same story: —

"The public will hear of nothing but rogues; and the only way in which poor authors, who must live, can act honestly by the public and themselves, is to paint such thieves as they are; not dandy, poetical, rose-water thieves, but real downright scoundrels, leading scoundrelly lives, drunken, profligate, dissolute, low, as scoundrels will be. They don't quote Plato like Eugene Aram, or live like gentlemen, and sing the pleasantest ballads in the world, like jolly Dick Turpin; or prate eternally about τὸ καλόν, like that precious canting Maltravers, whom we all of us have read about and pitied; or die whitewashed saints, like poor Biss Dadsy, in *Oliver Twist*. No, my dear madam, you and your daughters have no right to admire and sympathize with any such persons, fictitious or real: you ought to be made cordially to detest, scorn, loathe, abhor, and anathematize all people of this

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kidney. Men of genius, like those whose works we have above alluded to, have no business to make these characters interesting or agreeable, to be feeding your morbid fancies, or indulging their own with such monstrous food. For our parts, young ladies, we beg you to bottle up your tears, and not waste a single drop of them on any one of the heroes or heroines in this history; they are all rascals, every soul of them, and behave 'as sich.' Keep your sympathy for those who deserve it; don't carry it, for preference, to the Old Bailey, and grow maudlin over the company assembled there."

Neither of these tales, though it is very curious to look back at them now, can be considered quite successful. And the reason of this is not hard to find. It was impossible that they could be attractive as stories; while, on the other hand, the humor was not broad enough to command attention for itself. They were neither sufficiently interesting nor sufficiently amusing. They are caricatures without the element of caricature. In *Elisabeth*, we have little but the story of a crime committed by a criminal actuated by motives and overflowing with sentiments of the Eugene Aram type. *Catherine* is more ambitious. In it an attempt is made to construct a story, — to delineate character. The rival loves of Mr. Bullock and Mr. Hayes, and the adventures of the latter on his marriage-day, show, to some extent, the future novelist; while in the pictures of the manners of the times, slight though they are, in the characters of Corporal Brock and Cornet Galgenstein, and M. l'Abbé O'Flaherty, we

can trace, or at least we now fancy we can trace, the author of *Barry Lyndon* and *Henry Esmond*. Catherine herself, in her gradual progress from the village jilt to a murderess, is the most striking thing in the story, and is a sketch of remarkable power. But nothing could make a story interesting which consists of little more than the seduction of a girl, the intrigues of a mistress, the discontent of a wife growing into hatred and ending in murder. At the close, indeed, the writer resorts to the true way of making such a *jeu d'esprit* attractive, — burlesque. He concludes, though too late altogether to save the piece, in a blaze of theatrical blue-fire; and it was this idea of burlesque or extravagant caricature which led to the perfected successes of *George de Barnwell* and *Codlingsby*. In a literary point of view, it is well worth while to go back upon those early efforts; and we have dwelt upon them the more willingly that their purpose and the literary doctrine they contend for would be well remembered at this very time. We have given up writing about discovered criminals, only to write more about criminals not yet found out; the *lusus naturæ* school has given place to the sensational; the literature of the *Newgate Calendar* has been supplanted by the literature of the detective officer, — a style rather the worse and decidedly the more stupid of the two. The republication of *Catherine* might be a useful, and would be a not unpleas-

ing specific in the present diseased state of literary taste. We have said that the hand of the master is traceable in the characters of this tale. We have also a good example of what was always a marked peculiarity, both in his narrative writing and in his representations of composite natures, what some one has called his "sudden pathos," an effect of natural and unexpected contrast always deeply poetical in feeling, such as the love of Barry Lyndon for his son, the association of a murderess eyeing her victim, with images of beauty and happiness and peace. We quote the passage, although, as is always the case with the best things of the best writers, it suffers greatly by separation from the context, the force of the contrast being almost entirely lost : —

"Mrs. Hayes sat up in the bed sternly regarding her husband. There is, to be sure, a strong magnetic influence in wakeful eyes so examining a sleeping person; do not you, as a boy, remember waking of bright summer mornings and finding your mother looking over you? had not the gaze of her tender eyes stolen into your senses long before you woke, and cast over your slumbering spirit a sweet spell of peace, and love, and fresh-springing joy?"

In 1840, the *Shabby Genteel Story* appeared in *Fraser*, which broke off sorrowfully enough, as we are told, "at a sad period of the writer's own life," to be afterwards taken up in *The Adventures of Philip*. The story is not a pleasant one, nor can we read it without pain, although we know that

the after fortunes of the Little Sister are not altogether unhappy. But it shows clear indications of growing power and range; Brandon, Tufthunt, the Gann family, and Lord Cinqbars, can fairly claim the dignity of ancestors. The *Great Hogarty Diamond* came in 1841. This tale was always, we are informed in the preface to a separate edition in 1849, a great favorite with the author, — a judgment, however, in which at first he stood almost alone. It was refused by one magazine before it found a place in *Fraser*; and when it did appear it was little esteemed, or, indeed, noticed in any way. The late Mr. John Sterling took a different view, and wrote Mr. Thackeray a letter which “at that time gave me great comfort and pleasure.” Few will now venture to express doubts of Mr. Sterling’s discernment. But in reality we suspect that this story is not very popular. It is said to want humor and power; but, on the other hand, in its beauty of pathos and tenderness of feeling, quite indescribable, it reaches a higher point of art than any of the minor tales; and these qualities have gained for it admirers very enthusiastic if not numerous. *Fraser* for June of the same year has a most enjoyable paper called “Memorials of Gormandizing,” in which occurs the well-known adaptation of the “*Persicos Odi*,” — “Dear Lucy, you know what my wish is”; a paper better than anything in the “Original,” better because simpler

than Hayward's *Art of Dining*, and which should certainly be restored to a dinner-eating world. To say nothing of its quiet humor and comical earnestness, it has a real practical value. It would be invaluable to all the hungry Britons in Paris who lower our national character, and, what is a far greater calamity, demoralize even French cooks, by their well-meant but ignorant endeavors to dine. There is a description of a dinner at the Café Foy altogether inimitable; so graphic that the reader almost fancies himself in the actual enjoyment of the felicity depicted. Several of the Fitz-Boodle papers, which appeared in 1842-43, are omitted in the Miscellanies. But in spite of the judgment of the author himself we venture to think that Mr. Fitz-Boodle's love experiences as recorded in "Miss Löwe" (October, 1842), "Dorothea" (January, 1843), and "Ottilia" (February, 1843), are not unworthy of a place beside the "Ravenswing," and should be preserved as a warning to all fervent young men. And during these hard-working years we have also a paper on "Dickens in France," containing an amazing description of Nicholas Nickleby, as translated and adapted (bless thee, Bottom, thou art translated indeed!) to the Parisian stage, followed by a hearty defence of Boz against the criticism of Jules Janin; and "Bluebeard's Ghost," in its idea—that of carrying on a well-known story beyond its proper end—the forerunner of

Rebecca and Rowena. "Little Travels" is the title of two papers, in May and October, 1844, — sketches from Belgium, closely resembling, certainly not inferior, to the roundabout paper called a "Week's Holiday"; and our enumeration of his contributions to *Fraser* closes with the incomparable "Barry Lyndon." "The Hoggarty Diamond" is better and purer, and must therefore rank higher; but "Barry Lyndon" in its own line stands, we think, unrivalled; immeasurably superior, if we must have comparative criticism, to "Count Fathom"; superior even to the history of "Jonathan Wild." It seems to us to equal the sarcasm and remorseless irony of Fielding's masterpiece, with a wider range and a more lively interest.

Mr. Thackeray's connection with *Punch* began very early in the history of that periodical, and he continued a constant contributor at least up to 1850. The acquisition was an invaluable one to *Mr. Punch*. Without undue disparagement of that august dignitary, it may now be said that at first he was too exclusively metropolitan in his tone, too much devoted to "natural histories" of medical students and London idlers, — in fact, somewhat Cockney. Mr. Thackeray at once stamped it with a different tone; made its satire universal, adapted its fun to the appreciation of cultivated men. On the other hand, the connection with *Punch* must

have been of the utmost value to Mr. Thackeray. He had the widest range, could write without restraint, and without the finish and completeness necessary in more formal publications. The unrestrained practice in *Punch*, besides the improvement in style and in modes of thought which practice always gives, probably had no small share in teaching him wherein his real strength lay. For it is worthy of notice in Mr. Thackeray's literary career that this knowledge did not come easily or soon, but only after hard work and much experience. His early writings both in *Fraser* and *Punch* were as if groping. In these periodicals his happier efforts come last, and after many preludes, — some of them broken off abruptly. "Catherine" is lost in "George de Barnwell"; "Yellowplush" and "Fitz-Boodle" are the preambles to "Barry Lyndon" and "The Hoggarty Diamond"; *Punch's* "Continental Tour" and the "Wanderings of the Fat Contributor" close untimely, and are succeeded by the "Snob Papers" and the kindly wisdom of the elder Brown. Fame, indeed, was not now far off; but ere it could be reached there remained yet repeated effort and frequent disappointment. With peculiar pleasure we now recall the fact that these weary days of struggle and obscurity were cheered in no inconsiderable degree by the citizens of Edinburgh.

There happened to be placed in the window of an

Edinburgh jeweller a silver statuette of *Mr. Punch*, with his dress *en rigueur*, — his comfortable and tidy paunch, with all its buttons; his hunch; his knee-breeches, with their tie; his compact little legs, one foot a little forward; and the intrepid and honest, kindly little fellow firmly set on his pins, with his customary look of up to and good for anything. In his hand was his weapon, a pen; his skull was an inkhorn, and his cap its lid. A passer-by — who had long been grateful to our author, as to a dear unknown and enriching friend, for his writings in *Fraser* and in *Punch*, and had longed for some way of reaching him, and telling him how his work was relished and valued — be-thought himself of sending this inkstand to Mr. Thackeray. He went in, and asked its price. “Ten guineas, sir.” He said to himself, “There are many who feel as I do; why should n’t we send him up to him? I’ll get eighty several half-crowns, and that will do it” (he had ascertained that there would be discount for ready money). With the help of a friend, who says he awoke to Thackeray, and divined his great future, when he came, one evening, in *Fraser* for May, 1844, on the word *kinopium*,* the half-crowns were soon forthcoming,

* Here is the passage. It is from *Little Travels and Roadside Sketches*. Why are they not republished? We must have his *Opera Omnia*. He is on the top of the Richmond omnibus. “If I were a great prince, and rode out-

and it is pleasant to remember, that in the "octogint" are the names of Lord Jeffrey and Sir William Hamilton, who gave their half-crowns with the heartiest good will. A short note was written telling the story. The little man in silver was duly packed, and sent with the following inscription round the base:—

GULIELMO MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

ARMA VIRUMQUE
GRATI NECNON GRATÆ EDINENSES

LXXX.

D. D. D.

To this the following reply was made:—

13 YOUNG STREET, KENSINGTON SQUARE,
May 11, 1848.

"MY DEAR SIR,—The arms and the man arrived in safety yesterday, and I am glad to know the names of two of the eighty Edinburgh friends who have taken such a

side of coaches (as I should if I were a great prince), I would, whether I smoked or not, have a case of the best Havanas in my pocket, not for my own smoking, but to give them to the snobs on the coach, who smoke the vilest cheroots. They poison the air with the odor of their filthy weeds. A man at all easy in circumstances would spare himself much annoyance by taking the above simple precaution.

"A gentleman sitting behind me tapped me on the back, and asked for a light. He was a footman, or rather valet. He had no livery, but the three friends who accompanied

kind method of showing their good-will towards me. If you are grati I am grator. Such tokens of regard & sympathy are very precious to a writer like myself, who have some difficulty still in making people understand what you have been good enough to find out in Edinburgh, that under the mask satirical there walks about a sentimental gentleman who means not unkindly to any mortal person. I can see exactly the same expression under the vizard of my little friend in silver, and hope some day to shake the whole octogint by the hand gratos & gratas, and thank them for their friendliness and regard. I think I had best say no more on the subject, lest I should be tempted into some enthusiastic writing of wh I am afraid. I assure you these tokens of what I can't help acknowledging as popularity — make me humble as well as grateful — and make me feel an almost awful sense of the responsibility wh falls upon a man in such a station. Is it deserved or undeserved? Who is this that sets up to preach to mankind, and to laugh at many things wh men reverence? I hope I may be able to tell the truth always, & to see it aright, according to the eyes wh God Almighty gives me. And if, in the exercise of my calling I get friends, and find encourage-

him were tall men in pepper-and-salt undress jackets, with a duke's coronet on their buttons.

"After tapping me on the back, and when he had finished his cheroot, the gentleman produced another wind instrument, which he called a 'kinopium,' a sort of trumpet, on which he showed a great inclination to play. He began puffing out of the kinopium an abominable air, which he said was the 'Duke's March.' It was played by the particular request of the pepper-and-salt gentry.

"The noise was so abominable, that even the coachman objected, and said it was not allowed to play on *his* bus. 'Very well,' said the valet, '*we're only of the Duke of B——'s establishment, THAT'S ALL.*'"

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ment and sympathy, I need not tell you how much I feel and am thankful for this support. Indeed I can't reply lightly upon this subject or feel otherwise than very grave when people begin to praise me as you do. Wishing you and my Edinburgh friends all health and happiness believe me my dear Sir most faithfully yours

“W. M. THACKERAY.”

How like the man is this gentle and serious letter, written these long years ago! He tells us frankly his “calling”: he is a preacher to mankind. He “laughs,” he does not sneer. He asks home questions at himself as well as the world: “Who is this?” Then his feeling “not otherwise than very grave” when people begin to praise, is true conscientiousness. This servant of his Master hoped to be able “to tell the truth always, and to see it aright, according to the eyes which God Almighty gives me.” His picture by himself will be received as correct *now*, “a sentimental gentleman, meaning not unkindly to any mortal person,” — sentimental in its good old sense, and a gentleman in heart and speech. And that little touch about enthusiastic writing, proving all the more that the enthusiasm itself was there.

Of his work in *Punch*, the “Ballads of Pleace-man X,” the “Snob Papers,” “Jeames’ Diary,” the “Travels and Sketches in London,” a “Little Dinner at Timmins’,” are now familiar to most readers. But besides these he wrote much which has found

no place in the Miscellanies. M. de la Pluche discoursed touching many matters other than his own rise and fall. "Our Fat Contributor" wandered over the face of the earth gaining and imparting much wisdom and experience, if little information; Dr. Solomon Pacifico "prosed" on various things besides the "pleasures of being a Foggy"; and even two of the "Novels by Eminent Hands," *Crinoline* and *Stars and Stripes* have been left to forgetfulness. "Mrs. Tickletoby's Lectures on the History of England," in Vol. III. are especially good reading. Had they been completed, they would have formed a valuable contribution to the philosophy of history. His contributions to *Punch* became less frequent about 1850, but the connection was not entirely broken off till much later; we remember, in 1854, the "Letters from the Seat of War, by our own Bashi-Bazouk," who was, in fact, Major Gahagan again, always foremost in his country's cause. To the last, as *Mr. Punch* has himself informed us, he continued to be an adviser and warm friend, and was a constant guest at the weekly *symposia*.

In addition to all this work for periodicals, Mr. Thackeray had ventured on various independent publications. We have already alluded to *Flore et Zephyr*, his first attempt. In 1840, he again tried fortune with "The Paris Sketch-Book," which is at least remarkable for a dedication possessing the

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quite peculiar merit of expressing real feeling. It is addressed to M. Aretz, Tailor, 27 Rue Richelieu, Paris; and we quote it the more readily that, owing to the failure of these volumes to attract public attention, the rare virtues of that gentleman have been less widely celebrated than they deserve: —

“SIR, — It becomes every man in his station to acknowledge and praise virtue wheresoever he may find it, and to point it out for the admiration and example of his fellow-men.

“Some months since, when you presented to the writer of these pages a small account for coats and pantaloons manufactured by you, and when you were met by a statement from your debtor that an immediate settlement of your bill would be extremely inconvenient to him, your reply was, ‘Mon dieu, sir, let not that annoy you; if you want money, as a gentleman often does in a strange country, I have a thousand-franc note at my house, which is quite at your service.’ History or experience, sir, makes us acquainted with so few actions that can be compared to yours, — an offer like this from a stranger and a tailor seems to me so astonishing, — that you must pardon me for making your virtue public, and acquainting the English nation with your merit and your name. Let me add, sir, that you live on the first floor; that your cloths and fit are excellent, and your charges moderate and just; and, as a humble tribute of my admiration, permit me to lay these volumes at your feet.

“Your obliged faithful servant,

“M. A. TITMARSH.”

Some of the papers in these two volumes were reprints, as “Little Poincinct” and “Cartouche,” from *Fraser* for 1839; “Mary Ancel,” from *The New Monthly* for 1839; others appeared then for

the first time. They are, it must be confessed, of unequal merit. "A Caution to Travellers" is a swindling business, afterwards narrated in *Penden-nis*, by Amory or Altamont as among his own respectable adventures; "Mary Ancel" and "The Painter's Bargain" are amusing stories; while a "Gambler's Death" is a tale quite awful in the every-day reality of its horror. There is much forcible criticism on the French school of painting and of novel-writing, and two papers especially good, called "Caricatures and Lithography in Paris," and "Meditations at Versailles," the former of which gives a picture of Parisian manners and feeling in the Orleans times in no way calculated to make us desire those days back again; the latter an expression of the thoughts called up by the splendor of Versailles and the beauty of the Petit Trianon, in its truth, sarcasm, and half-melancholy, worthy of his best days. All these the public, we think, would gladly welcome in a more accessible form. Of the rest of the *Sketch-Book* the same can hardly be said, and yet we should ourselves much regret never to have seen, for example, the four graceful imitations of Béranger.

The appreciative and acquisitive tendencies of our Yankee friends forced, we are told, independent authorship on Lord Macaulay and Sir James Stephen. We owe to the same cause the publication of the "Comic Tales and Sketches" in 1841; Mr. Yellow-

plush's memoirs having been more than once reprinted in America before that date. The memoirs were accompanied with "The Fatal Boots" (from the *Comic Almanack*); the "Bedford Row Conspiracy," and the Reminiscences of that astonishing Major Gahagan (both from the *New Monthly Magazine*, 1838-1840, a periodical then in great glory, with Hood, Marryatt, Jerrold, and Laman Blanchard among its contributors); all now so known and so appreciated that the failure of this third effort seems altogether unaccountable. In 1843, however, the "Irish Sketch-Book" was, we believe, tolerably successful; and in 1846 the "Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo" was still more so; in which year also *Vanity Fair* began the career which has given him his place and name in English literature.

We have gone into these details concerning Mr. Thackeray's early literary life, not only because they seem to us interesting and instructive in themselves; not only because we think his severe judgment rejecting so many of his former efforts should in several instances be reversed; but because they give us much aid in arriving at a true estimate of his genius. He began literature as a profession early in life, — about the age of twenty-five, — but even then he was, as he says of Addison, "full and ripe." Yet it was long before he attained the measure of his strength, or discovered the true bent of

his powers. His was no sudden leap into fame. On the contrary, it was by slow degrees, and after many and vain endeavors, that he attained to anything like success. Were it only to show how hard these endeavors were, the above retrospect would be well worth while; not that the retrospect is anything like exhaustive. In addition to all we have mentioned, he wrote for the *Westminster*, for the *Examiner* and the *Times*; was connected with the *Constitutional*, and also, it is said, with the *Torch* and the *Parthenon*, — these last three being papers which enjoyed a brief existence. No man ever more decidedly refuted the silly notion which disassociates genius from labor. His industry must have been unremitting, for he worked slowly, rarely retouching, writing always with great thought and habitual correctness of expression. His writing would of itself show this; always neat and plain; capable of great beauty and minuteness. He used to say that if all trades failed, he would earn sixpences by writing the Lord's Prayer and the Creed (not the Athanasian) in the size of one. He considered and practised caligraphy as one of the fine arts, as did Porson and Dr. Thomas Young. He was continually catching new ideas from passing things, and seems frequently to have carried his work in his pocket, and when a thought, or a turn, or a word struck him, it was at once recorded. In the fullness of his experience, he was well pleased when he

wrote six pages of *Esmond* in a day ; and he always worked in the day, not at night. He never threw away his ideas ; if at any time they passed unheeded, or were carelessly expressed, he repeats them, or works them up more tellingly. In these earlier writings we often stumble upon the germ of an idea, or a story, or a character, with which his greater works have made us already familiar ; thus the swindling scenes during the sad days of Becky's decline and fall, and the Baden sketches in the *Newcomes*, the Deuceaces, and Punters, and Loders, are all in the *Yellowplush Papers* and the *Paris Sketch-Book* ; the University pictures of *Pendennis* are sketched, though slightly, in the *Shabby-Genteel Story* ; the anecdote of the child whose admirer of seven will learn that she has left town "from the newspapers," is transferred from the "Book of Snobs" to Ethel Newcome ; another child, in a different rank of life, whose acquisition of a penny gains for her half a dozen sudden followers and friends, appears, we think, three times ; "Canute," neglected in *Punch*, is incorporated in *Rebecca and Rowena*. And his names, on which he bestowed no ordinary care, and which have a felicity almost deserving an article to themselves, are repeated again and again. He had been ten years engaged in literary work before the conception of *Vanity Fair* grew up. Fortunately for him it was declined by at least one magazine, and, as

we can well believe, not without much anxiety and many misgivings he sent it out to the world alone. Its progress was at first slow ; but we cannot think its success was ever doubtful. A friendly notice in the *Edinburgh*, when eleven numbers had appeared, did something, the book itself did the rest ; and before *Vanity Fair* was completed, the reputation of its author was established.

Mr. Thackeray's later literary life is familiar to all. It certainly was not a life of idleness. *Vanity Fair*, *Pendennis*, *Esmond*, *The Newcomes*, *The Virginians*, *Philip* ; the Lectures on the "Humorists" and the "Georges" ; and that wonderful series of Christmas stories, *Mrs. Perkins's Ball*, *Our Street*, *Dr. Birch*, *Rebecca and Rowena*, and *The Rose and the Ring*, represent no small labor on the part of the writer, no small pleasure and improvement on the part of multitudes of readers. For the sake of the *Cornhill Magazine* he reverted to the editorial avocations of his former days, happily with a very different result both on the fortunes of the periodical and his own, but, we should think, with nearly as much discomfort to himself. The public, however, were the gainers, if only they owe to this editorship the possession of *Lovel the Widower*. We believe that *Lovel* was written for the stage, and was refused by the management of the Olympic about the year 1854. Doubtless the decision was wise, and *Lovel* might have failed as a comedy.

But as a tale it is quite unique, — full of humor, and curious experience of life, and insight ; with a condensed vigor, and grotesque effects and situations which betray its dramatic origin. The tone of many parts of the book, particularly the description of the emotions of a disappointed lover, shows the full maturity of the author's powers ; but there is a daring and freshness about other parts of it which would lead us to refer the dramatic sketch even to an earlier date than 1854. This imperfect sketch of his literary labors may be closed, not inappropriately, with the description which his "faithful old Gold Pen" gives us of the various tasks he set it to : —

" Since he my faithful service did engage
To follow him through his queer pilgrimage,
I've drawn and written many a line and page.

" Caricatures I scribbled have, and rhymes,
And dinner-cards, and picture pantomimes,
And merry little children's books at times.

" I've writ the foolish fancy of his brain ;
The aimless jest that, striking, hath caused pain ;
The idle word that he 'd wish back again.

* * *

" I've helped him to pen many a line for bread ;
To joke, with sorrow aching in his head ;
And make your laughter when his own heart bled.

" Feasts that were ate a thousand days ago,
Biddings to wine that long hath ceased to flow,
Gay meetings with good fellows long laid low ;

"Summons to bridal, banquet, burial, ball,
 Tradesman's polite reminders of his small
 Account due Christmas last, — I've answered all.

"Poor Diddler's tenth petition for a half-
 Guinea; Miss Bunyan's for an autograph;
 So I refuse, accept, lament, or laugh,

"Condole, congratulate, invite, praise, scoff,
 Day after day still dipping in my trough,
 And scribbling pages after pages off.

* * *

"Nor pass the words as idle phrases by;
 Stranger! I never writ a flattery,
 Nor signed the page that registered a lie."

"En réalité," says the writer of an interesting notice in *Le Temps*, "l'auteur de *Vanity Fair* (la *Foire aux vanités*) est un satiriste, un moraliste, un humoriste, auquel il a manqué, pour être tout-à-fait grand, d'être un artiste. Je dis tout-à-fait grand; car s'il est douteux que, comme humoriste, on le puisse comparer soit à Lamb, soit à Sterne, il est bien certain, du moins, que comme satiriste, il ne connaît pas de supérieurs, pas même Dryden, pas même Swift, pas même Pope. Et ce qui le distingue d'eux, ce qui l'élève au dessus d'eux, ce qui fait de lui un génie essentiellement original, c'est que sa colère, pour qui est capable d'en pénétrer le secret, n'est au fond que la réaction d'une nature tendre, furieuse d'avoir été désappointée." Beyond doubt the French critic is right in holding Thackeray's

special powers to have been those of a satirist or humorist. We shall form but a very inadequate conception of his genius if we look at him exclusively, or even chiefly, as a novelist. His gifts were not those of a teller of stories. He made up a story in which his characters played their various parts, because the requirement of interest is at the present day imperative, and because stories are well paid for, and also because to do this was to a certain extent an amusement to himself; but it was often, we suspect, a great worry and puzzle to him, and never resulted in any marked success. It is not so much that he is a bad constructor of a plot, as that his stories have no plot at all. We say nothing of such masterpieces of constructive art as *Tom Jones*; he is far from reaching even the careless power of the stories of Scott. None of his novels end with the orthodox marriage of hero and heroine, except *Pendennis*, which might just as well have ended without it. The stereotyped matrimonial wind-up in novels can of course very easily be made game of; but it has a rational meaning. When a man gets a wife and a certain number of hundreds a year, he grows stout, and his adventures are over. Hence novelists naturally take this as the crisis in a man's life to which all that has gone before leads up. But for Mr. Thackeray's purposes a man or woman is as good after marriage as before, — indeed, rather better. To some extent this is intentional; a charac-

ter, as he says somewhere, is too valuable a property to be easily parted with. Besides, he is not quite persuaded that marriage concludes all that is interesting in the life of a man: "As the hero and heroine pass the matrimonial barrier, the novelist generally drops the curtain, as if the drama were over then, the doubts and struggles of life ended; as if, once landed in the marriage country, all were green and pleasant there, and wife and husband had nothing but to link each other's arms together, and wander gently downwards towards old age in happy and perfect fruition." But he demurs to this view; and as he did not look on a man's early life as merely an introduction to matrimony, so neither did he regard that event as a final conclusion. Rejecting, then, this natural and ordinary catastrophe, he makes no effort to provide another. His stories stop, but they don't come to an end. There seems no reason why they should not go on further, or why they should not have ceased before. Nor does this want of finish result from weariness on the part of the writer, or from that fear of weariness on the part of readers which Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham expresses to Miss Martha Buskbody: "Really, madam, you must be aware that every volume of a narrative turns less and less interesting as the author draws to a conclusion; just like your tea, which, though excellent hyson, is necessarily weaker and more insipid in the last cup. Now, as I think the one is

by no means improved by the luscious lump of half-dissolved sugar usually found at the bottom of it, so I am of opinion that a history, growing already vapid, is but dully crutched up by a detail of circumstances which every reader must have anticipated, even though the author exhaust on them every flowery epithet in the language." It arises from the want of a plot, from the want often of any hero or heroine round whom a plot can centre. Most novelists know how to let the life out towards the end, so that the story dies quite naturally, having been wound up for so long. But his airy nothings, if once life is breathed into them, and they are made to speak and act, and love and hate, will not die; on the contrary, they grow in force and vitality under our very eye; the curtain comes sheer down upon them when they are at their best. Hence his trick of re-introducing his characters in subsequent works, as fresh and lifelike as ever. He does not indeed carry this so far as Dumas, whose characters are traced with edifying minuteness of detail from boyhood to the grave; Balzac or our own Trollope afford, perhaps, a closer comparison, although neither of these writers — certainly not Mr. Trollope — rivals Thackeray in the skill with which such reappearances are managed. In the way of delineation of character we know of few things more striking in its consistency and truth than *Beatrice Esmond* grown into the *Baroness Bernstein*; the attempt was hazardous, the success complete.

Yet this deficiency in constructive art was not inconsistent with dramatic power of the highest order. Curiously enough, if his stories for the most part end abruptly, they also for the most part open well. Of some of them, as *Pendennis* and the *Newcomes*, the beginnings are peculiarly felicitous. But his dramatic power is mainly displayed in his invention and representation of character. In invention his range is perhaps limited, though less so than is commonly said. He has not, of course, the sweep of Scott, and, even where a comparison is fairly open, he does not show Scott's creative faculty; thus, good as his high life below stairs may be, he has given us no Jenny Dennison. He does not attempt artisan life like George Eliot, nor, like other writers of the day, affect rural simplicity, or delineate provincial peculiarities (the Mulligan and Costigan are national), or represent special views or opinions. But he does none of these things, — not so much because his range is limited as because his art is universal. There are many phases of human life on which he has not touched; few developments of human nature. He has caught those traits which are common to all mankind, peer and artisan alike, and he may safely omit minor points of distinction. It is a higher art to draw men, than to draw noblemen or workingmen. If the specimen of our nature be brought before us, it matters little whether it be dressed in a lace coat or a fustian jacket.

Among novelists he stands, in this particular, hardly second to Scott. His pages are filled with those touches of nature which make the whole world kin. Almost every passion and emotion of the heart of man finds a place in his pictures. These pictures are taken mainly from the upper and middle classes of society, with an occasional excursion into Bohemia, sometimes even into depths beyond that pleasant land of lawlessness. In variety, truth, and consistency, they are unrivalled. They are not caricatures, they are not men of humors; they are the men and women whom we daily meet; they are, in the fullest sense of the word, representative; and yet they are drawn so sharply and finely that we never could mistake or confound them. Pendennis, Clive Newcome, Philip, are all placed in circumstances very much alike, and yet they are discriminated throughout by delicate and certain touches, which we hardly perceive even while we feel their effect. Only one English writer of fiction can be compared to Mr. Thackeray in this power of distinguishing ordinary characters, — the authoress of *Pride and Prejudice*. But with this power he combines, in a very singular manner, the power of seizing humors, or peculiarities, when it so pleases him. Jos. Sedley, Charles Honeyman, Fred Bayham, Major Pendennis, are so marked as to be fairly classed as men of humors; and in what a masterly way the nature in each is caught and

held firm throughout! In national peculiarities he is especially happy. The Irish he knows well: the French, perhaps, still better. How wonderfully clever is the sketch of "Mary, Queen of Scots" and the blustering Gascon, and the rest of her disreputable court at Baden! And what can those who object to Thackeray's women say of that gentle lady Madame de Florac,—a sketch of ideal beauty, with her early, never-forgotten sorrow, her pure, holy resignation? To her inimitable son no words can do justice. The French-English of his speech would make the fortune of any ordinary novel. It is as unique, and of a more delicate humor, than the orthography of Jeames. Perhaps more remarkable than even his invention is the fidelity with which the conception of his characters is preserved. This never fails. They seem to act, as it were, of themselves. The author having once projected them, appears to have nothing more to do with them. They act somehow according to their own natures, unprompted by him, and beyond his control. He tells us this himself in one of those delightful and most characteristic Roundabout Papers, which are far too much and too generally undervalued: "I have been surprised at the observations made by some of my characters. It seems as if an occult power was moving the pen. The personage does or says something, and I ask, How the dickens did he come to think of that? . . .

We spake anon of the inflated style of some writers. What also if there is an *afflated* style; when a writer is like a Pythoness, or her oracle tripod, and mighty words, words which he cannot help, come blowing, and bellowing, and whistling, and moaning through the speaking pipes of his bodily organ?" Take one of his most subtle sketches, — though it is but a sketch, — Elizabeth, in *Lovel the Widower*. The woman has a character, and a strong one; she shows it, and acts up to it; but it is as great a puzzle to us as the character of Hamlet; the author himself does not understand it. This is, of course, art; and it is the highest perfection of art; it is the art of Shakespeare; and hence it is that Thackeray's novels are interesting irrespective of the plot, or story, or whatever we choose to call it. His characters come often without much purpose: they go often without much reason; but they are always welcome, and for the most part we wish them well. Dumas makes up for the want of a plot by wild incident and spasmodic writing; Thackeray makes us forget a like deficiency by the far higher means of true conceptions, and consistent delineations of human nature. *Esmond*, alone of all his more important fictions, is artistically constructed. The marriage indeed of Esmond and Lady Castlewood marks no crisis in their lives; on the contrary, it might have happened at any time, and makes little change in their relations; but the work

derives completeness from the skill with which the events of the time are connected with the fortunes of the chief actors in the story, — the historical plot leading up to the catastrophe of Beatrix, the failure of the conspiracy, and the exile of the conspirators. In *Esmond*, too, Thackeray's truth to nature is especially conspicuous. In all his books the dialogue is surprising in its naturalness, in its direct bearing on the subject in hand. Never before, we think, in fiction did characters so uniformly speak exactly like the men and women of real life. In *Esmond* — owing to the distance of the scene — this rare excellence was not easy of attainment, yet it has been attained. Every one not only acts, but speaks in accordance certainly with the ways of the time, but always like a rational human being; there is no trace of that unnaturalness which offends us even in Scott's historical novels, and which substitutes for intelligible converse long harangues in pompous diction, garnished with strange oaths, — a style of communicating their ideas never adopted, we may be very sure, by any mortals upon this earth. Add to these artistic excellences a tenderness of feeling and a beauty of style which even Thackeray has not elsewhere equalled, and we come to understand why the best critics look on *Esmond* as his masterpiece.

Nor, in speaking of Thackeray as a novelist, should we forget to mention — though but in a word — his command of the element of tragedy.

The parting of George Osborne with Amelia, the stern grief of old Osborne for the loss of his son, the later life of Beatrix Esmond, the death of Colonel Newcome, are in their various styles perfect, and remarkable for nothing more than for the good taste which controls and subdues them all.

But, as we said before, to criticise Mr. Thackeray as a novelist is to criticise what was in him only an accident. He wrote stories, because to do so was the mode; his stories are natural and naturally sustained, because he could do nothing otherwise than naturally; but to be a teller of stories was not his vocation. His great object in writing was to express himself,—his notions of life, all the complications and variations which can be played by a master on this one everlasting theme. Composite human nature as it is, that sins and suffers, enjoys and does virtuously, that was "the main haunt and region of his song." To estimate him fairly, we must look at him as taking this wider range; must consider him as a humorist, using the word as he used it himself. "The humorous writer professes to awaken and direct your love, your pity, your kindness; your scorn for untruth, pretension, imposture; your tenderness for the weak, the poor, the oppressed, the unhappy. To the best of his means and ability, he comments on all the ordinary actions and passions of life almost. He takes upon himself to be the week-day preacher, so to speak.

Accordingly, as he finds and speaks and feels the truth best, we regard him, esteem him, — sometimes love him.” Adopting this point of view, and applying this standard, it seems to us that no one of the great humorists of whom he has spoken is deserving equally with himself of our respect, esteem, and love; — respect for intellectual power, placing him on a level even with Swift and Pope; esteem for manliness as thorough as the manliness of Fielding, and rectitude as unsullied as the rectitude of Addison; love for a nature as kindly as that of Steele. Few will deny the keen insight, the passion for truth of the week-day preacher we have lost; few will now deny the kindness of his disposition, but many will contend that the kindness was too much restrained; that the passion for truth was allowed to degenerate into a love of detecting hidden faults. The sermons on women have been objected to with especial vehemence and especial want of reason. No one who has read Mr. Brown’s letters to his nephew, — next to the Snob Papers and Sydney Smith’s Lectures, the best modern work on moral philosophy, — will deny that Mr. Thackeray can at least appreciate good women, and describe them: —

“Sir, I do not mean to tell you that there are no women in the world, vulgar and ill-humored, rancorous and narrow-minded, mean schemers, son-in-law hunters, slaves of fashion, hypocrites; but I do respect, admire, and almost

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worship good women; and I think there is a very fair number of such to be found in this world, and I have no doubt, in every educated Englishman's circle of society, whether he finds that circle in palaces in Belgravia and May Fair, in snug little suburban villas, in ancient comfortable old Bloomsbury, or in back parlors behind the shop. It has been my fortune to meet with excellent English ladies in every one of these places, — wives graceful and affectionate, matrons tender and good, daughters happy and pure-minded; and I urge the society of such to you, because I defy you to think evil in their company. Walk into the drawing-room of Lady Z., that great lady: look at her charming face, and hear her voice. You know that she can't but be good, with such a face and such a voice. She is one of those fortunate beings on whom it has pleased Heaven to bestow all sorts of its most precious gifts and richest worldly favors. With what grace she receives you; with what a frank kindness and natural sweetness and dignity! Her looks, her motions, her words, her thoughts, all seem to be beautiful and harmonious quite. See her with her children; what woman can be more simple and loving? After you have talked to her for a while, you very likely find that she is ten times as well read as you are: she has a hundred accomplishments which she is not in the least anxious to show off, and makes no more account of them than of her diamonds, or of the splendor round about her, — to all of which she is born, and has a happy, admirable claim of nature and possession, — admirable and happy for her and for us too; for is it not a happiness for us to admire her? Does anybody grudge her excellence to that paragon? Sir, we may be thankful to be admitted to contemplate such consummate goodness and beauty; and as, in looking at a fine landscape or a fine work of art, every generous heart must be delighted and improved, and ought to feel grateful afterwards, so one may feel charmed and thankful for having the opportunity of knowing an almost perfect woman. Madam, if the gout and the custom of the

world permitted, I would kneel down and kiss the hem of your ladyship's robe. To see your gracious face is a comfort, — to see you walk to your carriage is a holiday. Drive her faithfully, O thou silver-wigged coachman! drive to all sorts of splendors and honors and royal festivals. And for us, let us be glad that we should have the privilege to admire her.

"Now, transport yourself in spirit, my good Bob, into another drawing-room. There sits an old lady of more than fourscore years, serene and kind, and as beautiful in her age now as in her youth, when History toasted her. What has she not seen, and is she not ready to tell? All the fame and wit, all the rank and beauty, of more than half a century, have passed through those rooms where you have the honor of making your best bow. She is as simple now as if she had never had any flattery to dazzle her: she is never tired of being pleased and being kind. Can that have been anything but a good life which, after more than eighty years of it are spent, is so calm? Could she look to the end of it so cheerfully, if its long course had not been pure? Respect her, I say, for being so happy, now that she is old. We do not know what goodness and charity, what affections, what trials, may have gone to make that charming sweetness of temper, and complete that perfect manner. But if we do not admire and reverence such an old age as that, and get good from contemplating it, what are we to respect and admire?

"Or shall we walk through the shop (while N. is recommending a tall copy to an amateur, or folding up a two-pennyworth of letter-paper, and bowing to a poor customer in a jacket and apron with just as much respectful gravity as he would show while waiting upon a duke), and see Mrs. N. playing with the child in the back parlor until N. shall come into tea? They drink tea at five o'clock; and are actually as well-bred as those gentlefolks who dine three hours later. Or will you please to step into Mrs. J.'s lodgings, who is waiting, and at work, until her husband

comes home from Chambers? She blushes and puts the work away on hearing the knock, but when she sees who the visitor is, she takes it with a smile from behind the sofa cushion, and behold, it is one of J.'s waistcoats on which she is sewing buttons. She might have been a countess blazing in diamonds, had Fate so willed it, and the higher her station the more she would have adorned it. But she looks as charming while plying her needle as the great lady in the palace whose equal she is — in beauty, in goodness, in high-bred grace and simplicity; at least, I can't fancy her better, or any peeress being more than her peer."

But then he is accused of not having represented this. "It is said," to quote a friendly critic in the *Edinburgh Review* for 1848, "that having with great skill put together a creature of which the principal elements are indiscriminating affection, ill-requited devotion, ignorant partiality, a weak will and a narrow intellect, he calls on us to worship his poor idol as the type of female excellence. This is true." Feminine critics enforce similar charges yet more vehemently. Thus, Miss Brontë says: "As usual, he is unjust to women, quite unjust. There is hardly any punishment he does not deserve for making Lady Castlewood peep through a keyhole, listen at a door, and be jealous of a boy and a milk-maid." Mrs. Jameson criticises him more elaborately: "No woman resents his Rebecca, — inimitable Becky! No woman but feels and acknowledges with a shiver the completeness of that wonderful and finished artistic creation; but every woman resents the selfish, inane Amelia. . . . Laura in *Pen-*

dennis is a yet more fatal mistake. She is drawn with every generous feeling, every good gift. We do not complain that she loves that poor creature Pendennis, for she loved him in her childhood. She grew up with that love in her heart; it came between her and the perception of his faults; it is a necessity indivisible from her nature. Hallowed, through its constancy, therein alone would lie its best excuse, its beauty and its truth. But Laura, faithless to that first affection; Laura waked up to the appreciation of a far more manly and noble nature, in love with Warrington, and then going back to Pendennis, and marrying *him*! Such infirmity might be true of some women, but not of such a woman as Laura; we resent the inconsistency, the indelicacy of the portrait. And then Lady Castlewood, — so evidently a favorite of the author, what shall we say of her? The virtuous woman, *par excellence*, who ‘never sins and never forgives’; who never resents, nor relents, nor repents; the mother who is the rival of her daughter; the mother, who for years is the confidante of a man’s delirious passion for her own child, and then consoles him by marrying him herself! O Mr. Thackeray! this will never do! Such women may exist, but to hold them up as examples of excellence, and fit objects of our best sympathies, is a fault, and proves a low standard in ethics and in art.”

But all these criticisms, even if sound, go to this only, that Mr. Thackeray's *representations* of women are unjust: they are confined solely to his novels. Now, if the view we have taken of Mr. Thackeray's genius be the true one, such a limitation is unfair. He is not to be judged only by his novels as a representer of character, he must be judged also by all his writings together as a describer and analyzer of character. In the next place, the said criticisms are based upon wonderfully hasty generalizations. Miss Brontë knew that *she* would not have listened at a keyhole, and she jumps at once to the conclusion that neither would Lady Castlewood. But surely the character of that lady is throughout represented as marred by many feminine weaknesses falling little short of unamiability. Is the existence of a woman greedy of affection, jealous, and unforgiving, an impossibility? Her early love for Esmond we cannot quite approve; her later marriage with him we heartily disapprove; but neither of these things is the fault of the writer. With such a woman as Lady Castlewood, deprived of her husband's affection, the growth of an attachment towards her dependant into a warmer feeling was a matter of extreme probability; and her subsequent marriage to Esmond, affectionate, somewhat weak, and above all, disappointed elsewhere, was, in their respective relations, a mere certainty. Not to have married them would have been a mistake in art.

Thus, when a friend remonstrated with him for having made Esmond "marry his mother-in-law," he replied, "*I* didn't make him do it; they did it themselves." But as to Lady Castlewood's being a favorite with the author, which is the gravamen of the charge, that is a pure assumption on the part of Mrs. Jameson. We confess to having always received, in reading the book, a clear impression to the contrary. Laura, again, we do not admire vehemently; but we cannot regard her returning to her first love, after a transient attachment to another, as utterly unnatural. Indeed, we think it the very thing a girl of her somewhat commonplace stamp of character would certainly have done. She never is much in love with Pendennis either first or last, but she marries him nevertheless. She might have loved Warrington, had the Fates permitted it, very differently; and as his wife, would never have displayed those airs of self-satisfaction and moral superiority which make her so tediously disagreeable. But all this fault-finding runs up into the grand objection, that Thackeray's good women are denied brains; that he preserves an essential alliance between moral worth and stupidity; and it is curious to see how women themselves dislike this, — how, in their admiration of intellect, they admit the truth of Becky willingly enough, but indignantly deny that of Amelia. On this question Mr. Brown thus expresses himself: —

"A set has been made against clever women from all times. Take all Shakespeare's heroines: they all seem to me pretty much the same, affectionate, motherly, tender, that sort of thing. Take Scott's ladies, and other writers, each man seems to draw from one model: an exquisite slave is what we want for the most part, a humble, flattering, smiling, child-loving, tea-making, pianoforte-playing being, who laughs at our jokes however old they may be, coaxes and wheedles us in our humors, and fondly lies to us through life."

In the face of *Rosalind*, *Beatrice*, and *Portia*, it is impossible to concur with Mr. Brown in his notions about Shakespeare's women; but otherwise he is right. Yet it is but a poor defence for the deficiencies of a man of genius, that others have shown the like short-comings. And on Mr. Thackeray's behalf a much better defence may be pleaded; though it may be one less agreeable to the sex which he is said to have maligned. That defence is a simple plea of not guilty; a denial that his women, as a class, want intellectual power to a greater extent than is consistent with truth. They vary between the extremes of pure goodness and pure intellect — *Becky* and *Amelia* — just as women do in real life. The moral element is certainly too prominent in *Amelia*; but not more so than in *Colonel Newcome*, and we can't see anything much amiss in *Helen Pendennis*. *Laura*, as *Miss Bell*, is clever enough for any man; and, though she afterwards becomes exceedingly tiresome and a prig, she does not be-

come a fool. And what man would be bold enough to disparage the intellectual powers of Ethel Newcome? Her moral nature is at first incomplete owing to a faulty education; but when this has been perfected through sorrow, wherein is the character deficient? Besides, we must bear in mind that virtue in action is undoubtedly "slow." Goodness is not in itself entertaining, while ability is; and the novelist therefore, whose aim is to entertain, naturally labors most with the characters possessing the latter, in which characters the reader too is most interested. Hence they acquire greater prominence both as a matter of fact in the story and also in our minds. Becky, Blanche Amory, 'Trix, are undeniably more interesting, and in their points of contrast and resemblance afford far richer materials for study than Amelia, Helen Pendennis, and Laura. But this is in the nature of things; and the writer must not be blamed for it any more than the readers. Taking, however, the Thackerian gallery as a whole, we cannot admit that either in qualities of heart or head his women are inferior to the women we generally meet. Perhaps he has never — not even in Ethel — combined these qualities in their fullest perfection; but then how often do we find them so combined? It seems to us that Thackeray has drawn women more carefully and more truly than any novelist in the language, except Miss Austen; and it is small reproach to any writer, that he has

drawn no female character so evenly good as Anne Elliot or Elizabeth Bennet.

If this is true of his women, we need not labor in defence of his men. For surely it cannot be questioned that his representations of the ruder sex are true, nay, are on the whole an improvement on reality? The ordinary actors who crowd his scene are not worse than the people we meet with every day; his heroes, to use a stereotyped expression, are rather better than the average; while one such character as George Warrington is worth a wilderness of commonplace excellence called into unnatural life. But then it is said his general tone is bitter; he settles at once on the weak points of humanity, and to lay them bare is his congenial occupation. To a certain extent this was his business. "Dearly beloved," he says, "neither in nor out of this pulpit do I profess to be bigger, or cleverer, or wiser, or better than any of you." Nevertheless he was a preacher, though an unassuming one; and therefore it lay upon him to point out faults, to correct rather than to flatter. Yet it must be confessed that his earlier writings are sometimes too bitter in their tone, and too painful in their theme. This may be ascribed partly to the infectious vehemence of *Fraser* in those days, partly to the influence of such experiences as are drawn upon in some parts of the *Paris Sketch-Book*; but, however accounted for, it must be condemned as an

error in art. As a disposition to doubt and despond in youth betrays a narrow intellect, or a perverted education; so in the beginning of a literary career, a tendency towards gloom and curious research after hidden evil reveals artistic error, or an unfortunate experience. Both in morals and art these weaknesses are generally the result of years and sorrow; and thus the common transition is from the joyousness of youth to sadness, it may be to moroseness, in old age. But theirs is the higher and truer development, who reverse this process, — who, beginning with false tastes or distorted views, shake these off as they advance into a clearer air, in whom knowledge but strengthens the nobler powers of the soul, and whose kindness and generosity, based on a firmer foundation than the buoyancy of mere animal life, are purer and more enduring. Such, as it appears to us, was the history of Thackeray's genius. Whatever may have been the severity of his earlier writings, it was latterly laid aside. In the *Newcomes* he follows the critical dogma which he lays down, that "fiction has no business to exist unless it be more beautiful than reality"; and truthful kindness marks all his other writings of a later date, from the letters of Mr. Brown and Mr. Spec in *Punch*, down to the pleasant egotism of the "Roundabout Papers." He became disinclined for severe writing even where deserved: "I have militated in

former times, and not without glory, but I grow peaceable as I grow old." The only things towards which he never grew peaceable were pretentiousness and falsehood. But he preferred to busy himself with what was innocent and brave, to attacking even these; he forgot the satirist, and loved rather honestly to praise or defend. The "Roundabout Papers" show this on every page, especially, perhaps, those on Tunbridge Toys, on Ribbons, on a Joke I heard from the late Thomas Hood, and that entitled *Nil nisi bonum*. The very last paper of all was an angry defence of Lord Clyde against miserable club gossip, unnecessary perhaps, but a thing one likes now to think that Thackeray felt stirred to do. "To be tremblingly alive to gentle impressions," says Foster, "and yet be able to preserve, when occasion requires it, an immovable heart, even amidst the most imperious causes of subduing emotion, is perhaps not an impossible constitution of mind, but it is the utmost and rarest condition of humanity." These words do not describe the nature of a man who would pay out of his own pocket for contributions he could not insert in the *Cornhill*; but if for heart we substitute intellect, they will perfectly describe his literary genius. He was always tremblingly alive to gentle impressions, but his intellect amidst any emotions remained clear and immovable; so that good taste was never absent, and false sentiment never came

near him. He makes the sorrows of Werther the favorite reading of the executioner at Strasbourg.*

Few men have written so much that appeals directly to our emotions, and yet kept so entirely aloof from anything tawdry, from all falsetto. "If my tap," says he, "is not genuine, it is naught, and no man should give himself the trouble to drink it." It was at all times thoroughly genuine, and is therefore everything to us. Truthfulness, in fact, eager and uncompromising, was his main characteristic; truthfulness not only in speech, but, what is a far more uncommon and precious virtue, truth in

* Among his ballads we have the following somewhat literal analysis of this work:—

"Werther had a love for Charlotte
Such as words could never utter;
Would you know how first he met her?
She was cutting bread and butter.

"Charlotte was a married lady,
And a moral man was Werther,
And, for all the wealth of Indies,
Would do nothing for to hurt her.

"So he sighed and pined and ogled,
And his passion boiled and bubbled,
Till he blew his silly brains out,
And no more was by it troubled.

"Charlotte, having seen his body
Borne before her on a shutter,
Like a well-conducted person,
Went on cutting bread and butter."

thought. His entire mental machinery acted under this law of truth. He strove always to find and show things as they really are, — true nobleness apart from trappings, unaffected simplicity, generosity without ostentation ; confident that so he would best convince every one that what is truly good pleases most, and lasts longest, and that what is otherwise soon becomes tiresome, and, worst of all, ridiculous. A man to whom it has been given consistently to devote to such a purpose the highest powers of sarcasm, ridicule, sincere pathos, and, though sparingly used, of exhortation, must be held to have fulfilled a career singularly honorable and useful. To these noble ends he was never unfaithful. True, he made no boast of this. Disliking cant of all kinds, he made no exception in favor of the cant of his own profession. “What the deuse,” he writes to a friend, “our twopenny reputations get us at least twopence-halfpenny ; and then comes *nox fabulæque manes*, and the immortals perish.” The straightforward Mr. Yellowplush stoutly maintains, in a similar strain, that people who write books are no whit better, or actuated by more exalted motives, than their neighbors : “Away with this canting about great motifs ! Let us not be too prowd, and fanny ourselves marters of the truth, marters or apostels. We are but tradesmen, working for bread, and not for righteousness’ sake. Let’s try and work honestly ; but don’t let us be

praying pompisly about our 'sacred calling.'"

And George Warrington, in *Pendennis*, is never weary of preaching the same wholesome doctrine. Thackeray had no sympathy with swagger of any kind. His soul revolted from it; he always talked under what he felt. At the same time, indifference had no part in this want of pretence. So far from being indifferent, he was peculiarly sensitive to the opinions of others; too much so for his own happiness. He hated to be called a cynical satirist; the letter we have quoted to his Edinburgh friends shows how he valued any truer appreciation. Mere slander he could despise like a man; he winced under the false estimates and injurious imputations too frequent from people who should have known better. But he saw his profession as it really was, and spoke of it with his innate simplicity and dislike of humbug. And in this matter, as in the ordinary affairs of life, those who profess little, retaining a decent reserve as to their feelings and motives, are far more to be relied on than those who protest loudly. Whether authors are moved by love of fame, or a necessity for daily bread, does not greatly signify. The world is not concerned with this in the least; it can only require that, as Mr. Yellowplush puts it, they should "try to work honestly"; and herein he never failed. He never wrote but in accordance with his convictions; he spared no pains that his convictions should be in

accordance with truth. For one quality we cannot give him too great praise; that is the sense of the distinction of right and of wrong. He never puts bitter for sweet, or sweet for bitter; never calls evil things good, or good things evil; there is no haziness or muddle; no "topsyturvifications," like Madame Sand's, in his moralities: — with an immense and acute compassion for all suffering, with a power of going out of himself, and into almost every human feeling, he vindicates at all times the supremacy of conscience, the sacredness and clearness of the law written in our hearts.

His keenness of observation and his entire truthfulness found expression in a style worthy of them in its sharpness and distinctness. The specimens we have quoted of his earlier writings show that these qualities marked his style from the first. He labored to improve those natural gifts. He steadily observed Mr. Yellowplush's recommendation touching poetical composition: "Take my advise, honorable sir — listen to a humble footmin: it's generally best in poatry to understand puffickly what you mean yourself, and to ingspress your meaning clearly afterwoods — in the simpler words the better, praps." He always expressed his meaning clearly and in simple words. But as, with increasing experience, his meanings deepened and widened, his expression became richer. The language continued to the last simple and direct, but

it became more copious, more appropriate, more susceptible of rhythmical combinations: in other words, it rose to be the worthy vehicle of more varied and more poetical ideas. This strange peculiarity of soberness in youth, of fancy coming into being at the command and for the service of the mature judgment, has marked some of the greatest writers. The words in which Lord Macaulay has described it with regard to Bacon may be applied, with little reservation, to Thackeray: "He observed as vigilantly, meditated as deeply, and judged as temperately, when he gave his first work to the world, as at the close of his long career. But in eloquence, in sweetness and variety of expression, and in richness of illustration, his later writings are far superior to those of his youth." Confessedly at the last he was the greatest master of pure English in our day. His style is never ornate, on the contrary is always marked by a certain reserve which surely betokens thought and real feeling; is never forced or loaded, only entirely appropriate and entirely beautiful; like crystal, at once clear and splendid. We quote two passages, both from books written in his prime, not merely as justifying these remarks, but because they illustrate qualities of his mind second only to his truthfulness,—his sense of beauty and his sense of pathos. And yet neither passage has any trace of what he calls the "sin of grandiloquence, or

tall-talking." The first is the end of the *Kick'le-burys on the Rhine* : —

"The next morning we had passed by the rocks and towers, the old familiar landscapes, the gleaming towers by the river-side, and the green vineyards combed along the hills; and when I woke up, it was at a great hotel at Cologne, and it was not sunrise yet. Deutz lay opposite, and over Deutz the dusky sky was reddened. The hills were veiled in the mist and the gray. The gray river flowed underneath us; the steamers were roosting along the quays, a light keeping watch in the cabins here and there, and its reflection quivering in the water. As I look, the sky-line towards the east grows redder and redder. A long troop of gray horsemen winds down the river road, and passes over the bridge of boats. You might take them for ghosts, those gray horsemen, so shadowy do they look; but you hear the trample of their hoofs as they pass over the planks. Every minute the dawn twinkles up into the twilight; and over Deutz the heaven blushes brighter. The quays begin to fill with men; the carts begin to creak and rattle; and wake the sleeping echoes. Ding, ding, ding, the steamers' bells begin to ring; the people on board to stir and wake; the lights may be extinguished, and take their turn of sleep; the active boats shake themselves, and push out into the river; the great bridge opens and gives them passage; the church-bells of the city begin to clink; the cavalry trumpets blow from the opposite bank; the sailor is at the wheel, the porter at his burden, the soldier at his musket, and the priest at his prayers. . . . And lo! in a flash of crimson splendor, with blazing scarlet clouds running before his chariot, and heralding his majestic approach, God's sun rises upon the world, and all nature wakens and brightens. O glorious spectacle of light and life! O beatific symbol of Power, Love, Joy, Beauty! Let us look at thee with humble wonder, and thankfully acknowledge and adore.

What gracious forethought is it, — what generous and loving provision, that deigns to prepare for our eyes and to soothe our hearts with such a splendid morning festival! For these magnificent bounties of Heaven to us, let us be thankful, even that we can feel thankful (for thanks surely is the noblest effort, as it is the greatest delight, of the gentle soul); and so, a grace for this feast, let all say who partake of it. . . . See! the mist clears off Drachenfels, and it looks out from the distance, and bids us a friendly farewell."

Our second quotation describes Esmond at his mother's grave, — one of the most deeply affecting pieces of writing in the language: —

"Esmond came to this spot in one sunny evening of spring, and saw amidst a thousand black crosses, casting their shadows across the grassy mounds, that particular one which marked his mother's resting-place. Many more of those poor creatures that lay there had adopted that same name with which sorrow had rebaptized her, and which fondly seemed to hint their individual story of love and grief. He fancied her, in tears and darkness, kneeling at the foot of her cross, under which her cares were buried. Surely he knelt down, and said his own prayer there, not in sorrow so much as in awe (for even his memory had no recollection of her), and in pity for the pangs which the gentle soul in life had been made to suffer. To this cross she brought them; for this heavenly bridegroom she exchanged the husband who had wooed her, the traitor who had left her. A thousand such hillocks lay round about, the gentle daisies springing out of the grass over them, and each bearing its cross and *requiescat*. A nun, veiled in black, was kneeling hard by, at a sleeping sister's bedside (so fresh made, that the spring had scarce had time to spin a coverlid for it); beyond the cemetery walls you had glimpses of life and the world, and the spires and gables of the city. A bird came down from a roof opposite, and lit first on

a cross, and then on the grass below it, whence it flew away presently with a leaf in its mouth: then came a sound of chanting, from the chapel of the sisters hard by: others had long since filled the place which poor Mary Magdalene once had there, were kneeling at the same stall and hearing the same hymns and prayers in which her stricken heart had found consolation. Might she sleep in peace,—might she sleep in peace; and we, too, when our struggles and pains are over! But the earth is the Lord's as the heaven is; we are alike his creatures here and yonder. I took a little flower off the hillock and kissed it, and went my way like the bird that had just lighted on the cross by me, back into the world again. Silent receptacle of death, tranquil depth of calm, out of reach of tempest and trouble. I felt as one who had been walking below the sea, and treading amidst the bones of shipwrecks."

Looking at Mr. Thackeray's writings as a whole, he would be more truthfully described as a sentimentalist than as a cynic. Even when the necessities of his story compel him to draw bad characters, he gives them as much good as he can. We don't remember in his novels any utterly unredeemed scoundrel except Sir Francis Clavering. Even Lord Steyne has something like genuine sympathy with Major Pendennis's grief at the illness of his nephew. And if reproof is the main burden of his discourse, we must remember that to reprove, not to praise, is the business of the preacher. Still further, if his reproof appears sometimes unduly severe, we must remember that such severity may spring from a belief that better things are possible. Here lies the secret of Thackeray's seeming bitter-

ness. His nature was, in the words of the critic in *Le Temps*, "*furieuse d'avoir été désappointée.*" He condemns sternly men as they often are, because he had a high ideal of what they might be. The feeling of this contrast runs through all his writings. "He could not have painted *Vanity Fair* as he has, unless Eden had been shining brightly before his eyes."* And this contrast could never have been felt, the glories of Eden could never have been seen, by the mere satirist or by the misanthrope. It has been often urged against him that he does not make us think better of our fellow-men. No, truly. But he does what is far greater than this, — he makes us think worse of ourselves. There is no great necessity that we should think well of other people; there is the utmost necessity that we should know ourselves in our every fault and weakness; and such knowledge his writings will supply.

In Mr. Hannay's Memoir,† which we have read with admiration and pleasure, a letter from Thackeray is quoted, very illustrative of this view of his character: "I hate Juvenal; I mean, I think him a truculent brute, and I love Horace better than you do, and rate Churchill much lower; and as for Swift, you have n't made me alter my opinion. I

* Essays by George Brimley. Second edition. Cambridge, 1860. A collection of singularly good critical papers.

† *A Brief Memoir of the late Mr. Thackeray.* By James Hannay. Edinburgh, 1864.

admire, or rather admit, his power as much as you do ; but I don't admire that kind of power so much as I did fifteen years ago, or twenty shall we say. *Love is a higher intellectual exercise than hatred.*" We think the terrible Dean had love as well as hate strong within him, and none the worse in that it was more special than general ; " I like Tom, Dick, and Harry," he used to say ; " I hate the race " ; but nothing can be more characteristic of Thackeray than this judgment. Love was the central necessity of his understanding as well as of his affections ; it was his fulfilling of the law ; and unlike the Dean, he could love Tom, and also like and pity as well as rebuke the race.

Mr. Thackeray has not written any history formally so called. But it is known that he purposed doing so, and in *Esmond* and the *Lectures* he has given us much of the real essence of history. The *Saturday Review*, however, in a recent article, has announced that this was a mistake ; that history was not his line. Such a decision is rather startling. In one or two instances of historical representation, Mr. Thackeray may have failed. Johnson and Richardson do not appear in the *Virginians* with much effect. But surely in the great majority of instances he has been eminently successful. Horace Walpole's letter in the *Virginians*, the fictitious " Spectator " in *Esmond*, are very felicitous literary imitations. Good-natured trooper Steele comfort-

ing the boy in the lonely country-house ; Addison, serene and dignified, " with ever so slight a touch of *merum* in his voice " occasionally ; Bolingbroke, with a good deal of *merum* in his voice, talking reckless Jacobitism at the dinner at General Webbe's, are wonderful portraits. And, though the estimate of Marlborough's character may be disputed, the power with which that character is represented cannot be questioned. But the historical genius displayed in *Esmond* goes beyond this. We know of no history in which the intrigues and confusion of parties at the death of Queen Anne are sketched so firmly as in the third volume of that work ; in fact, a more thorough historical novel was never written. It is not loaded with historical learning ; and yet it is most truly, though or rather *because* unpretendingly, a complete representation of the time. It reads like a veritable memoir. And it will hardly be disputed, that a good historical novel cannot be written save by one possessed of great historical powers. What are the qualities necessary to a historian ? Knowledge, love of truth, insight into human nature, imagination to make alive before him the times of which he writes. All these Mr. Thackeray had. His knowledge was accurate and minute, — indeed, he could not have written save of what he knew well ; a love of truth was his main characteristic ; for insight into human nature he ranks second to Shakespeare alone ; and, while he wanted

that highest creative imagination which makes the poet, he had precisely that secondary imagination which serves the historian, which can realize the past and make the distant near. Had he been allowed to carry out his cherished design of recording the reign of Queen Anne, a great gap in the history of our country would have been filled up by one of the most remarkable books in the language. We might have had less than is usual of the "dignity of history," of battles and statutes and treaties; but we should have had more of human nature,—the actors in the drama would have been brought before us living and moving, their passions and hidden motives made clear; the life of England would have been sketched by a subtle artist; the literature of England, during a period which this generation often talks about, but of which it knows, we suspect, very little, would have been presented to us lighted up by appreciative and competent criticism. The *Saturday Reviewer* gives a reason for Mr. Thackeray's failure as a historian, which will seem strange to those who have been accustomed to regard him as a cynic. "He was so carried away by worth," says this ingenious critic bent on fault-finding, "and so impatient of all moral obliquity, that he could not value fairly the services which had been rendered by bad men." And the instance given is that a sense of what we owe to the Hanoverian succession was not allowed to temper the severity

of the estimate given of the first two Georges ; — an unfortunate instance, as the critic would have discovered had he read the following passage in the lecture on George the Second : —

“ But for Sir Robert Walpole, we should have had the Pretender back again. But for his obstinate love of peace, we should have had wars which the nation was not strong enough nor united enough to endure. But for his resolute counsels and good-humored resistance, we might have had German despots attempting a Hanoverian regimen over us ; we should have had revolt, commotion, want, and tyrannous misrule, in place of a quarter of a century of peace, freedom, and material prosperity, such as the country never enjoyed, until that corrupter of parliaments, that dissolute, tipsy cynic, that courageous lover of peace and liberty, that great citizen, patriot, and statesman governed it.”

The truth is, that Mr. Thackeray, while fully appreciating the blessings of the Hanoverian succession, knew well that the country did not in the least degree owe the stability of that succession to the Hanoverian kings, but, on the contrary, to that great minister, whose character is sketched, in a powerful passage, of which the above quotation is a part. In fact, Mr. Thackeray judged no man harshly. No attentive student of his works can fail to see that he understood the duty of “ making allowance,” not less with regard to historical characters, than with regard to characters of his own creation. He does full justice, for example, to the courage and conduct of Marlborough, as to whose moral

character the opinion of Colonel Esmond is in curious accordance with the historical judgment given later to the public by Lord Macaulay.

These "Lectures on the Georges" were made the ground of a charge against Mr. Thackeray of disloyalty. This charge was urged with peculiar offensiveness by certain journals, which insinuated that the failings of English kings had been selected as a theme grateful to the American audiences who first heard the lectures delivered. Mr. Thackeray felt this charge deeply, and repelled it in language which we think worthy to be remembered. At a dinner given to him in Edinburgh, in 1857, he said:—

"I had thought that in these lectures I had spoken in terms not of disrespect or unkindness, and in feelings and in language not un-English, of her Majesty the Queen; and wherever I have had to mention her name, whether it was upon the banks of the Clyde or upon those of the Mississippi, whether it was in New England or in Old England, whether it was in some great hall in London to the artisans of the suburbs of the metropolis, or to the politer audiences of the western end, — wherever I had to mention her name, it was received with shouts of applause, and with the most hearty cheers. And why was this? It was not on account of the speaker; it was on account of the truth; it was because the English and the Americans — the people of New Orleans a year ago, the people of Aberdeen a week ago — all received and acknowledged with due allegiance the great claims to honor which that lady has who worthily holds that great and awful situation which our Queen occupies. It is my loyalty that is called in question, and it is my

loyalty that I am trying to plead to you. Suppose, for example, in America,—in Philadelphia or in New York,—that I had spoken about George IV. in terms of praise and affected reverence, do you believe they would have hailed his name with cheers, or have heard it with anything like respect? They would have laughed in my face if I had so spoken of him. They know what I know and you know, and what numbers of squeamish loyalists who affect to cry out against my lectures know, that that man's life was not a good life,—that that king was not such a king as we ought to love, or regard, or honor. And I believe, for my part, that in speaking the truth, as we hold it, of a bad sovereign, we are paying no disrespect at all to a good one. Far from it. On the contrary, we degrade our own honor and the Sovereign's by unduly and unjustly praising him; and the mere slaverer and flatterer is one who comes forward, as it were, with flash notes, and pays with false coin his tribute to Cæsar. I don't disguise that I feel somehow on my trial here for loyalty, for honest English feeling."

The judgment pronounced by the accomplished Scotch judge who presided at this dinner-trial, a man far removed, both by tastes and position, from any sympathy with vulgar popularity-hunting, will be accepted by every candid person as just:—

"I don't," said Lord Neaves, "for my part, regret if there are some painful truths told in these lectures to those who had before reposed in the pleasing delusion that everything royal was immaculate. I am not sorry that some of the false trappings of royalty or of a court life should be stripped off. We live under a Sovereign whose conduct, both public and private, is so unexceptionable, that we can afford to look all the facts connected with it in the face; and woe be to the country or to the crown when the voice of truth shall be stifled as to any such matters, or when the only tongue that is allowed to be heard is that of flattery."

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It was said of Fontenelle that he had as good a heart as could be made out of brains. Adapting the observation, we may say of Thackeray that he was as good a poet as could be made out of brains. The highest gifts of the poet of course he wanted. His imagination, to take Ruskin's distinction, was more penetrative than associative or contemplative. His mind was too much occupied with realities for persistent ideal work. But manliness and common sense, combined with a perfect mastery of language, go a long way at least to the making of very excellent verses. More than this, he had the sensibility, the feeling of time and of numbers essential to versifying; and his mind fulfilled the condition required by our greatest living poet: —

“Clear and bright it should be ever,
Flowing like a crystal river.”

His verse-making was a sort of pleasaunce, — a flower-garden in the midst of spacious policies. It was the ornamentation of his intellect. His ballads do not perhaps show poetic feeling more profound than is possessed by many men; they derive, for the most part, their charm from the same high qualities as mark his prose, with the attraction of music and rhyme superadded. Writing them seems to have given him real pleasure. The law of self-imposed restraint, of making the thought often wait upon the sound, necessary in rhythmical composi-

tion, rather than, as in prose, the sound upon the sense, — this measuring of feeling and of expression had plainly a great charm for his rich and docile genius. His verses give one the idea of having been a great delight to himself, like humming a favorite air; there is no trace of effort, and yet the trick of the verse is perfect. His rhymes are often as good as Swift's and Hood's. This feeling of enjoyment, as also the abounding fertility in strange rhymes, is very marked in the *White Squall*; and hardly less in the ease and gayety of *Peg of Limavaddy*. Take, for instance, the description of the roadside inn where Peg dispenses liquor: —

“Limavaddy inn ’s
 But a humble baithouse,
 Where you may procure
 Whiskey and potatoes;
 Landlord at the door
 Gives a smiling welcome
 To the shivering wights
 Who to his hotel come.
 Landlady within
 Sits and knits a stocking,
 With a wary foot
 Baby’s cradle rocking.
 To the chimney nook,
 Having found admittance,
 There I watch a pup
 Playing with two kittens;
 (Playing round the fire,
 Which of blazing turf is,
 Roaring to the pot
 Which bubbles with the murphies)

And the cradled babe
 Fond the mother nursed it,
 Singing it a song
 As she twists the worsted! ”

Peg herself and her laugh, —

“ Such a silver peal !
 In the meadows listening,
 You who 've heard the bells
 Ringing to a christening ;
 You who ever heard
 Caradori pretty,
 Smiling like an angel,
 Singing 'Giovinetti' ;
 Fancy Peggy's laugh,
 Sweet, and clear, and cheerful,
 At my pantaloons
 With half a pint of beer full !
 See her as she moves !
 Scarce the ground she touches,
 Airy as a fay,
 Graceful as a duchess ;
 Bare her rounded arm,
 Bare her little leg is,
 Vestris never showed
 Ankles like to Peggy's ;
 Braided is her hair,
 Soft her look and modest,
 Slim her little waist
 Comfortably bodiced.”

In a similar light and graceful style are the Cane-Bottomed Chair, Piscator and Piscatrix, the Car-men Lillienne, etc. ; and all the *Lyra Hibernica*, especially the rollicking Battle of Limerick, are rich in Irish absurdity. That compact little epic,

the Chronicle of the Drum, the well-known Bouillabaisse, and At the Church Gate, — the first literary effort of Mr. Arthur Pendennis, — seem to us in their various styles to rise into the region of real poetry. The Chronicle of the Drum is a grand martial composition, and a picture of the feelings of the French soldiery which strikes on us at once as certainly true. The Ballads of Pleaceman X. are unique in literature, — as startlingly original as Tam O'Shanter. Jacob Homnium's Hoss is perhaps the most amusing, the Foundling of Shore-ditch the most serious; but through them all there runs a current of good sense, good feeling, and quaint fun which makes them most pleasant reading. They remind one somehow of John Gilpin, — indeed there is often the same playful fancy and delicate pensiveness in Thackeray as in Cowper. We should like to quote many of these; but we give in preference Miss Tickletoby's ballad on King Canute, long though it be, because it is not included in the collected ballads, and has not, we fear, obtained great popularity by being incorporated into *Rebecca and Rowena*, — a rendering of poetical justice less generally read than it should be: —

KING CANUTE.

King Canute was weary-hearted; he had reigned for years
a score;

Battling, struggling, pushing, fighting, killing much and
robbing more,

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And he thought upon his actions, walking by the wild sea-shore.

'Twixt the chancellor and bishop walked the king with steps sedate,
Chamberlains and grooms came after, silver sticks and gold sticks great,
Chaplains, aides-de-camp, and pages, — all the officers of state.

Sliding after like his shadow, pausing when he chose to pause;
If a frown his face contracted, straight the courtiers dropped their jaws;
If to laugh the king was minded, out they burst in loud hee-haws.

But that day a something vexed him, that was clear to old and young:
Thrice his grace had yawned at table, when his favorite gleeman sung;
Once the queen would have consoled him, but he bade her hold her tongue.

"Something ails my gracious master," cried the keeper of the seal;

"Sure, my lord, it is the lampreys served at dinner, or the veal!"

"Psha!" exclaimed the angry monarch, "keeper, 't is not that I feel.

"'T is the *heart* and not the dinner, fool, that doth my rest impair;

Can a king be great as I am, prithee, and yet know no care?

"O I 'm sick, and tired, and weary." — Some one cried,
"The king's arm-chair!"

Then towards the lackeys turning, quick my lord the
keeper nodded,
Straight the king's great chair was brought him, by two
footmen able-bodied;
Languidly he sank into it: it was comfortably wadded.

"Leading on my fierce companions," cried he, "over storm
and brine,
I have fought and I have conquered! Where was glory
like to mine!"
Loudly all the courtiers echoed, "Where is glory like to
thine?"

"What avail me all my kingdoms? Weary am I now, and
old;
Those fair sons I have begotten long to see me dead and
cold;
Would I were, and quiet buried, underneath the silent
mould!

"O remorse, the writhing serpent! at my bosom tears and
bites!
Horrid, horrid things I look on, though I put out all the
lights;
Ghosts of ghastly recollections troop about my bed of
nights.

"Cities burning, convents blazing, red with sacrilegious
fires;
Mothers weeping, virgins screaming, vainly for their
slaughtered sires—"
—"Such a tender conscience," cries the bishop, "every
one admires.

"But for such unpleasant by-gones, cease, my gracious lord,
to search,
They're forgotten and forgiven by our holy Mother Church;
Never, never does she leave her benefactors in the lurch.

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"Look! the land is crowned with minsters, which your
Grace's bounty raised;
Abbeys filled with holy men, where you and Heaven are
daily praised;
You, my lord, to think of dying? on my conscience, I'm
amazed!"

"Nay, I feel," replied King Canute, "that my end is
drawing near."

"Don't say so," exclaimed the courtiers (striving each to
squeeze a tear),

"Sure your Grace is strong and lusty, and may live this
fifty year."

"Live these fifty years!" the bishop roared, with actions
made to suit,

"Are you mad, my good lord keeper, thus to speak of King
Canute?"

Men have lived a thousand years, and sure his Majesty will
do 't."

"Adam, Enôch, Lamech, Canan, Mahaleel, Methusela,
Lived nine hundred years apiece, and may n't the king as
well as they?"

"Fervently," exclaimed the keeper, "fervently, I trust he
may."

"He to die," resumed the bishop. "He a mortal like to us?
Death was not for him intended, though *communis omnibus*;
Keeper, you are irreligious, for to talk and cavil thus.

"With his wondrous skill in healing ne'er a doctor can
compete,
Loathsome lepers, if he touch them, start up clean upon
their feet;
Surely he could raise the dead up, did his Highness think it
meet.

"Did not once the Jewish captain stay the sun upon the hill,
And, the while he slew the foemen, bid the silver moon stand
still ?

So, no doubt, could gracious Canute, if it were his sacred
will."

"Might I stay the sun above us, good Sir Bishop?" Canute
cried;

"Could I bid the silver moon to pause upon her heavenly
ride?

If the moon obeys my orders, sure I can command the tide.

"Will the advancing waves obey me, bishop, if I make the
sign?"

Said the bishop, bowing lowly, "Land and sea, my lord, are
thine."

Canute turned towards the ocean,— "Back!" he said,
"thou foaming brine.

"From the sacred shore I stand on, I command thee to
retreat;

Venture not, thou stormy rebel, to approach thy master's
seat;

Ocean, be thou still! I bid thee come not nearer to my
feet!"

But the sullen ocean answered with a louder, deeper roar,
And the rapid waves drew nearer, falling sounding on the
shore;

Back the keeper and the bishop, back the king and courtiers
bore.

And he sternly bade them never more to kneel to human
clay,

But alone to praise and worship that which earth and seas
obey;

And his golden crown of empire never wore he from that
day.

King Canute is dead and gone: parasites exist alway.

We must say a few words on his merits as an artist and a critic of art. We can hardly agree with those who hold that he failed as an artist, and then took to his pen. There is no proof of failure; his art accomplishes all he sets it to. Had he, instead of being a gentleman's son, brought up at the Charter-house and Cambridge, been born in the parish of St. Bartholomew the Great, and apprenticed, let us say, when thirteen years old, to Raimbach the engraver, we might have had another, and in some ways a subtler Hogarth. He draws well; his mouths and noses, his feet, his children's heads, all his ugly and queer "mugs," are wonderful for expression and good drawing. With beauty of man or woman he is not so happy; but his fun is, we think, even more abounding and *funnier* in his cuts than in his words. The love of fun in him was something quite peculiar. Some writers have been more witty; a few have had a more delicate humor; but none, we think, have had more of that genial quality which is described by the homely word *fun*. It lay partly in imitation, as in the "Novels by Eminent Hands." There were few things more singular in his intellectual organization than the coincidence of absolute originality of thought and style with exquisite mimetic power. But it oftener showed itself in a pure love of nonsense, — only nonsense of the highest order. He was very fond of abandoning himself to this temper: witness the "Story *à la Mode*" in the *Cornhill*, some of the

reality-giving touches in which would have done credit to Gulliver. Major Gahagan is far funnier than Baron Munchausen; and where is there more exquisite nonsense than "The Rose and the Ring," with the "little beggar baby that laughed and sang as droll as may be"? There is much of this spirit in his ballads,* especially, as we have already said,

* We subjoin an astonishing piece of nonsense, — a species of song, or ditty, which he chanted, we believe, *extempore* [in singing, each line to be repeated twice]: —

LITTLE BILLEE.

There were 3 sailors in Bristol city,
Who took a boat and went to sea.

But first with beef and captain's biscuit,
And pickled pork they loaded she.

There was guzzling Jack and gorging Jimmy,
And the youngest he was Little Billee.

Now very soon, they were so greedy,
They did n't leave not one split pea.

Says guzzling Jack to gorging Jimmy,
"I am extremely hungaree."

Says gorging Jim to guzzling Jacky,
"We have no provisions, so we must eat we."

Says guzzling Jack to gorging Jimmy,
"O gorging Jim, what a fool you be!

"There 's little Bill is young and tender,
We 're old and tough, so let 's eat he."

"O Bill, we 're going to kill and eat you,
So undo the collar of your chemie."

the series by Pleaceman X.; but we are inclined to think that it finds most scope in his drawings. We well remember our surprise on coming upon some of his earlier works for *Punch*. Best of all was an impressive series illustrative of the following passage in the *Times* of December 7, 1843: "The agents of the tract societies have lately had recourse to a new method of introducing their tracts into Cadiz. The tracts were put into glass bottles *securely corked*; and, taking advantage of the tide

When Bill received this infumation
He used his pocket-handkerchie.

"O let me say my catechism,
As my poor mammy taught to me."

"Make haste, make haste," says guzzling Jacky,
While Jim pulled out his snickersnee.

So Bill went up the maintop-gallant mast,
Where down he fell on his bended knee.

He scarce had come to the Twelfth Commandment,
When up he jumps, "There 's land, I see.

"There 's Jerusalem and Madagascar,
And North and South Amerikee.

"There 's the British fleet a riding at anchor,
With Admiral Nelson, K. C. B."

So when they came to the admiral's vessel,
He hanged fat Jack and flogged Jimmee.

But as for little Bill, he made him
The captain of a seventy-three.

flowing into the harbor, they were committed to the waves, on whose surface they floated towards the town, where the inhabitants eagerly took them up on their arriving at the shore. The bottles were then uncorked, and the tracts they contain are *supposed to have been* read with much interest." The purpose of the series is to hold up to public odium the Dissenting tract-smuggler, — Tractistero dissentero contrabandistero. The first cut represents a sailor, "thirsty as the seaman naturally is," rushing through the surf to seize the bottle which has been bobbing towards him. "Sherry, perhaps," he exclaims to himself and his friend. Second cut: the thirsty expectant has the bottle in position, and is drawing the cork, another mariner, and a little wondering boy, capitally drawn, looking on. "Rum, I hope," is the thought of each. Lastly we have the awful result: our friend holds up on the corkscrew to his companion and the universe "a Spanish translation of the Cow-boy of Kensington Common," with an indignant "Tracts, by jingo!" Then there is John Balliol, in *Miss Tickletoby's Lectures*, "cutting" into England on a ragged sheltie, which is trotting like a maniac over a series of bowlders, sorely discomposing the rider, whose kilt is of the shortest. Even better is the cut illustrative of the ballad of "King Canute," the king and his courtiers on the shore, with bathing-machines and the Union-jack in the distance; and a

most proposterous representation of the *non Angli sed Angli* story. We wish Mr. Thackeray's excellent friends, the proprietors of *Punch*, would reprint all his odds and ends, with their woodcuts. They will get the laughter and gratitude of mankind if they do.

He is, as far as we recollect, the only great author who illustrated his own works. This gives a singular completeness to the result. When his pen has said its say, then comes his pencil and adds its own felicity. Take the original edition of the *Book of Snobs*, all those delicious Christmas little quartos, especially *Mrs. Perkins's Ball* and the *Rose and the Ring* (one of the most perfectly realized ideas we know of), and see how complete is the duet between the eye and the mind, between word and figure. There is an etching in the *Paris Sketch-Book* which better deserves to be called "high art" than most of the class so called. It is Majesty in the person of "Le Grand Monarque" in and stripped of its externals, which are there also by themselves. The lean and slippered old pantaloon is tottering peevishly on his staff, his other hand in his waistcoat pocket; his head absolutely bald; his whole aspect pitiable and forlorn, querulous and absurd. To his left is his royal self, in all his glory of high-heeled boots, three-storied flowing wig, his orders, and sword, and all his "dread magnificence," as we know him in his pictures; on his right we behold,

and somehow feel as if the old creature, too, is in awe of them, — his clothes, *per se*, — the “properties” of the great European actor, set ingeniously up, and looking as grand and much steadier than with him inside. The idea and the execution are full of genius. The frontispiece of the same book contains a study of Heads, than which Hogarth certainly never did anything better. These explanatory lines are below the picture : —

“ Number 1 ’s an ancient Carlist ; number 3 a Paris artist ;
Gloomily there stands between them number 2, a Bonapartist ;

In the middle is King Louis Philip standing at his ease,
Guarded by a loyal grocer, and a serjeant of police ;

4 ’s the people in a passion ; 6 a priest of pious mien ;

5 a gentleman of fashion copied from a magazine.”

No words can do justice to the truth and power of this group of characters : it gives a history of France during the Orleans dynasty.

We give a fac-simile * of a drawing sent by him to a friend, with the following note : —

“ Behold a drawing instead of a letter. I ’ve been thinking of writing you a beautiful one ever so long, but, etc., etc. And instead of doing my duty this morning, I began this here drawing, and will pay your debt some other day, — no, *part* of your debt. I intend to owe the rest, and like to owe it, and think I ’m sincerely grateful to you always, my dear good friends.

“ W. M. T.”

* See Frontispiece.

This drawing is a good specimen of his work ; it tells its own story, as every drawing should. Here is the great lexicographer, with his ponderous, shuffling tread, his thick lips, his head bent down, his book close to his purblind eyes, himself *totus in illo*, reading as he fed, greedily and fast. Beside him simpers the clumsy and inspired Oliver, in his new plum-colored coat ; his eyes bent down in an ecstasy of delight, for is he not far prouder of his visage, and such a visage ! and of his coat, than of his artless genius ? We all know about that coat, and how Mr. Filby never got paid for it. There he is behind his window in sartorial posture, his uplifted goose arrested, his eye following wistfully, and not without a sense of glory and dread, that coat and man. His journeyman is grinning at him ; he is paid weekly, and has no risk. And then what a genuine bit of Thackeray, the street boy and his dear little admiring sister ! — there they are, stepping out in mimicry of the great two. Observe the careful, honest work, and how the turn of the left foot of the light-hearted and heeled *gamin*, — whose toes, much innocent of shoes, have a prehensile look about them, suggestive of the Huxley grandfather, — is corrected, as also Dr. Goldsmith's. He could never let anything remain if it was untrue.

It would not be easy to imagine better criticisms of art than those from Mr. Thackeray's hand in

Fraser, in *Punch*, in a kindly and beautiful paper on our inimitable John Leech in the *Quarterly*, in a Roundabout on Rubens, and throughout his stories, — especially the *Newcomes*, — wherever art comes in. He touches the matter to the quick, — and touches nothing else; and, while sensitive to all true and great art, he detects and detests all that is false or mean. He is not so imaginative, not so impassioned and glorious, not so amazing in illustration, and in painting better than pictures, as Mr. Ruskin, who has done more for art and its true interests than all other writers. But he is more to be trusted because he is more objective, more cool, more critical in the true sense. He sees everything by the *lumen siccum*, though it by no means follows that he does not feel as well as see; but here, as in everything else, his art “has its seat in reason, and is judicious.” Here is his description of Turner’s Old Téméraire, from a paper on the Royal Academy in *Fraser*. We can give it no higher praise than that it keeps its own with Ruskin’s: —

“I must request you to turn your attention to a noble river piece, by J. W. M. Turner, Esq., R. A., ‘The Fighting Téméraire,’ as grand a painting as ever figured on the walls of any academy, or came from the easel of any painter. The old Téméraire is dragged to her last home by a little, spiteful, diabolical steamer. A mighty red sun, amidst a host of flaring clouds, sinks to rest on one side of the picture, and illumines a river that seems interminable, and a countless navy that fades away into such a wonderful distance as

never was painted before. The little demon of a steamer is belching out a volume (why do I say a volume? not a hundred volumes could express it) of foul, lurid, red-hot, malignant smoke, paddling furiously, and lashing up the water round about it; while behind it (a cold, gray moon looking down on it), slow, sad, and majestic, follows the brave old ship, with death, as it were, written on her. . . . It is absurd, you will say (and with a great deal of reason), for Titmarsh or any other Briton to grow so politically enthusiastic about a four-foot canvas, representing a ship, a steamer, a river, and a sunset. But herein surely lies the power of the great artist. He makes you see and think of a great deal more than the objects before you; he knows how to soothe or to intoxicate, to fire or to depress, by a few notes, or forms, or colors, of which we cannot trace the effect to the source, but only acknowledge the power. I recollect some years ago, at the theatre at Weimar, hearing Beethoven's 'Battle of Vittoria,' in which, amidst the storm of glorious music, the air of 'God save the King' was introduced. The very instant it begun, every Englishman in the house was bolt upright, and so stood reverently until the air was played out. Why so? From some such thrill of excitement as makes us glow and rejoice over Mr. Turner and his 'Fighting Téméraire,' which I am sure, when the art of translating colors into poetry or music shall be discovered, will be found to be a magnificent national ode or piece of music."

When speaking of *The Slave Ship* by the same amazing artist, he says, with delightful *naïveté*: "I don't know whether it is sublime or ridiculous," — a characteristic instance of his outspoken truthfulness; and he lays it down that the "first quality of an artist is to have a large heart," believing that all art, all imaginative work of the highest order, must

originate in and be addressed to the best powers of the soul, must "submit the shows of things to the desires of the mind."

Mr. Trollope says, in the *Cornhill* for this February, "that which the world will most want to know of Thackeray is the effect which his writings have produced." In one sense of the word, the world is not likely ever to find this out; it is a matter which each man must determine for himself. But the world can perhaps ascertain what special services Mr. Thackeray has rendered; and it is this probably which Mr. Trollope means. His great service has been in his exposure of the prevailing faults of his time. Among the foremost are the faults of affectation and pretence, but there is one yet more grievous than these, — the sceptical spirit of the age. This he has depicted in the gentlest and saddest of all his books, *Pendennis*: —

"And it will be seen that the lamentable stage to which his logic at present has brought him" (Arthur Pendennis) "is one of general scepticism and sneering acquiescence in the world as it is; or if you like so to call it, a belief qualified with scorn in all things extant. . . . And to what does this easy and sceptical life lead a man? Friend Arthur was a Sadducee, and the Baptist might be in the wilderness shouting to the poor, who were listening with all their might and faith to the preacher's awful accents and denunciations of wrath or woe or salvation; and our friend the Sadducee would turn his sleek mule with a shrug and a smile from the crowd, and go home to the shade of his terrace, and muse over preacher and audience, and turn to his

roll of Plato, or his pleasant Greek song-book babbling of honey and Hybla, and nymphs and fountains and love. To what, we say, does this scepticism lead? It leads a man to a shameful loneliness and selfishness, so to speak, — the more shameful because it is so good-humored and conscienceless and serene. Conscience! What is conscience? Why accept remorse? What is public or private faith? Mythuses alike enveloped in enormous tradition."

The delineation is not a pleasant one, but it is true. The feeling hardly deserves to be called scepticism; it is rather a calm indifferentism, a putting aside of all things sacred. And as the Sadducees of Judæa were, on the whole, better men than the Pharisees, so this modern Sadducean feeling prevails not only among the cultivated classes, but among those conspicuously honorable and upright. These men, in fact, want spiritual guides and teachers. The clergy do not supply this want; most of them refuse to acknowledge its existence; Mr. Thackeray, with his fearless truthfulness, sees it and tells it. To cure it is not within his province. As a lay-preacher, only the secondary principles of morality are at his command. "Be each, pray God, a gentleman," is his highest sanction. But though he cannot tell the afflicted whither to turn, it is no slight thing to have laid bare the disorder from which so many suffer, and which all, with culpable cowardice, study to conceal. And he does more than lay bare the disorder; he convinces us how serious it is. He does this by showing us its evil

effect on a good and kindly nature. No teaching can be more impressive than the contrast between Pendennis under the influence of this sceptical spirit, and Warrington, over whom, crushed as he is by hopeless misfortune, it has no power.

The minor vices of affectation and pretension he assails directly. To do this was his especial mission from the first. What success may have attended his efforts we cannot certainly tell. It is to be feared, however, that, despite his teaching, snobs, like poverty, will never cease out of the land. But all who feel guilty, — and every one of us is guilty more or less, — and who desire to amend, should use the means: the "Book of Snobs" should be read carefully at least once a year. His was not the hortatory method. He had no notion that much could be done by telling people to be good. He found it more telling to show that by being otherwise they were in danger of becoming unhappy, ridiculous, and contemptible. Yet he did not altogether neglect positive teaching. Many passages might be taken from his works — even from the remorseless "Book of Snobs" itself — which inculcate the beauty of goodness; and the whole tendency of his writings, from the first to the last line, he penned during a long and active literary life, has invariably been to inspire reverence for manliness and purity and truth. And to sum up all, in representing after his measure the characteristics of the

age, Mr. Thackeray has discharged one of the highest functions of a writer. His keen insight into modern life has enabled him to show his readers that life fully; his honesty and high tone of mind has enabled him to do this truly. Hence he is the healthiest of writers. In his pages we find no false stimulus, no pernicious ideals, no vulgar aims. We are led to look at things as they really are, and to rest satisfied with our place among them. Each man learns that he can do much if he preserves moderation; that if he goes beyond his proper sphere he is good for nothing. He teaches us to find a fitting field for action in our peculiar studies or business, to reap lasting happiness in the affections which are common to all. Our vague longings are quieted; our foolish ambitions checked; we are soothed into contentment with obscurity, — encouraged in an honest determination to do our duty.

A "Roundabout Paper" on the theme *Nil nisi bonum* concludes thus: —

"Here are two literary men gone to their account; and, *laus Deo*, as far as we know, it is fair, and open, and clean. Here is no need of apologies for shortcomings, or explanations of vices which would have been virtues but for unavoidable, etc. Here are two examples of men most differently gifted: each pursuing his calling; each speaking his truth as God bade him; each honest in his life; just and irreproachable in his dealings; dear to his friends; honored by his country; beloved at his fireside. It has been the fortunate lot of both to give incalculable happiness and delight to the world, which thanks them in return with an

immense kindness, respect, affection. It may not be our chance, brother-scribe, to be endowed with such merit or rewarded with such fame. But the rewards of these men are rewards paid to our service. We may not win the baton or epaulettes; but God give us strength to guard the honor of the flag!"

The prayer was granted: he had strength given him always to guard the honor of the flag; and now his name is worthy to be placed beside the names of Washington Irving and Lord Macaulay, as of one no whit less deserving the praise of these noble words.

We have seen no satisfactory portrait of Mr. Thackeray. We like the photographs better than the prints; and we have an old daguerreotype of him without his spectacles which is good; but no photograph can give more of a man than is in any one ordinary — often very ordinary — look of him; it is only Sir Joshua and his brethren who can paint a man liker than himself. Lawrence's first drawing has much of his thoroughbred look, but the head is too much tossed up and *vif*. The photograph from the later drawing by the same hand we like better: he is alone, and reading with his book close up to his eyes. This gives the prodigious size and solidity of his head, and the sweet mouth. We have not seen that by Mr. Watts, but, if it is as full of power and delicacy as his Tennyson, it will be a comfort.

Though in no sense a selfish man, he had a won-

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derful interest in himself as an object of study, and nothing could be more delightful and unlike anything else than to listen to him on himself. He often draws his own likeness in his books. In the "Fraserians," by Maclise, in *Fraser*, is a slight sketch of him in his unknown youth; and there is an excessively funny and not unlike extravaganza of him by Doyle or Leech, in the *Month*, a little short-lived periodical, edited by Albert Smith. He is represented lecturing, when certainly he looked his best. We give below what is like him in face as well as in more. The tired, young, kindly wag



is sitting and looking into space, his mask and his jester's rod lying idly on his knees.

The foregoing estimate of his genius must stand instead of any special portraiture of the man. Yet we would mention two leading traits of character traceable, to a large extent, in his works, though finding no appropriate place in a literary criticism

of them. One was the deep steady melancholy of his nature. He was fond of telling how on one occasion, at Paris, he found himself in a great crowded *salon*; and looking from the one end across the sea of heads, being in Swift's place of calm in a crowd,* he saw at the other end a strange visage, staring at him with an expression of comical woebegoneness. After a little he found that this rueful being was himself in the mirror. He was not, indeed, morose. He was alive to and thankful for every-day blessings, great and small; for the happiness of home, for friendship, for wit and music, for beauty of all kinds, for the pleasures of the "faithful old gold pen"; now running into some felicitous expression, now playing itself into some droll initial letter; nay, even for the creature comforts. But his persistent state, especially for the later half of his life, was profoundly *morne*,—there is no other word for it. This arose in part from temperament, from a quick sense of the littleness and wretchedness of mankind. His keen perception of the meanness and vulgarity of the realities around him contrasted with the ideal present to his mind could produce no other effect. This feeling, embittered by disappointment, acting on a harsh and savage nature, ended in the *sæva indignatio* of Swift; acting on

* "An inch or two above it."

the kindly and too sensitive nature of Mr. Thackeray, it led only to compassionate sadness. In part, too, this melancholy was the result of private calamities. He alludes to these often in his writings and a knowledge that his sorrows were great is necessary to the perfect appreciation of much of his deepest pathos. We allude to them here, painful as the subject is, mainly because they have given rise to stories, — some quite untrue, some even cruelly injurious. The loss of his second child in infancy was always an abiding sorrow, — described in the "Hoggarty Diamond," in a passage of surpassing tenderness, too sacred to be severed from its context. A yet keener and more constantly present affliction was the illness of his wife. He married her in Paris when he was "mewing his mighty youth," preparing for the great career which awaited him. One likes to think on these early days of happiness, when he could draw and write with that loved companion by his side: he has himself sketched the picture: "The humblest painter, be he ever so poor, may have a friend watching at his easel, or a gentle wife sitting by with her work in her lap, and with fond smiles or talk or silence, cheering his labors." After some years of marriage, Mrs. Thackeray caught a fever, brought on by imprudent exposure at a time when the effects of such ailments are more than usually lasting both on the system and the nerves. She never after-

wards recovered so as to be able to be with her husband and children. But she has been from the first intrusted to the good offices of a kind family, tenderly cared for, surrounded with every comfort by his unwearied affection. The beautiful lines in the ballad of the "Bouillabaisse" are well known:—

"Ah me! how quick the days are flitting!
 I mind me of a time that's gone,
 When here I'd sit as now I'm sitting,
 In this same place, — but not alone.
 A fair young form was nestled near me,
 A dear, dear face looked fondly up,
 And sweetly spoke and smiled to cheer me,
 — There's no one now to share my cup."

In one of the latest Roundabouts we have this touching confession: "I own for my part that, in reading pages which this hand penned formerly, I often lose sight of the text under my eyes. It is not the words I see; but that past day; that by-gone page of life's history; that tragedy, comedy it may be, which our little home-company was en-acting; that merry-making which we shared; that funeral which we followed; that bitter, bitter grief which we buried." But all who knew him know well, and love to recall, how these sorrows were soothed and his home made a place of happiness by his two daughters and his mother, who were his perpetual companions, delights, and blessings, and whose feeling of inestimable loss now will be best

borne and comforted by remembering how they were everything to him, as he was to them.

His sense of a higher Power, his reverence and godly fear, is felt more than expressed — as indeed it mainly should always be — in everything he wrote. It comes out at times quite suddenly, and stops at once, in its full strength. We could readily give many instances of this. One we give, as it occurs very early, when he was probably little more than six-and-twenty; it is from the paper, “Madame Sand and the New Apocalypse.” Referring to Henri Heine’s frightful words, “*Dieu qui se meurt*,” “*Dieu est mort*,” and to the wild godlessness of *Spiridion*, he thus bursts out: “O awful, awful name of God! Light unbearable! mystery unfathomable! vastness immeasurable! Who are these who come forward to explain the mystery, and gaze unblinking into the depths of the light, and measure the immeasurable vastness to a hair? O name that God’s people of old did fear to utter! O light that God’s prophet would have perished had he seen! who are these now so familiar with it?” In ordinary intercourse the same sudden “*Te Deum*” would occur, always brief and intense, like lightning from a cloudless heaven; he seemed almost ashamed, — not of it, but of his giving it expression.

We cannot resist here recalling one Sunday evening in December, when he was walking with two

friends along the Dean road, to the west of Edinburgh, — one of the noblest outlets to any city. It was a lovely evening, — such a sunset as one never forgets; a rich dark bar of cloud hovered over the sun, going down behind the Highland hills, lying bathed in amethystine bloom; between this cloud and the hills there was a narrow slip of the pure ether, of a tender cowslip color, lucid, and as if it were the very body of heaven in its clearness; every object standing out as if etched upon the sky. The northwest end of Corstorphine Hill, with its trees and rocks, lay in the heart of this pure radiance, and there a wooden crane, used in the quarry below, was so placed as to assume the figure of a cross; there it was, unmistakable, lifted up against the crystalline sky. All three gazed at it silently. As they gazed, he gave utterance in a tremulous, gentle, and rapid voice, to what all were feeling, in the word “CALVARY!” The friends walked on in silence, and then turned to other things. All that evening he was very gentle and serious, speaking, as he seldom did, of divine things, — of death, of sin, of eternity, of salvation; expressing his simple faith in God and in his Saviour.

There is a passage at the close of the “Roundabout Paper,” No. XXIII., *De Finibus*, in which a sense of the ebb of life is very marked: the whole paper is like a soliloquy. It opens with a drawing of Mr. Punch, with unusually mild eye, retiring

for the night; he is putting out his high-heeled shoes, and before disappearing gives a wistful look into the passage, as if bidding it and all else good-night. He will be in bed, his candle out, and in darkness, in five minutes, and his shoes found next morning at his door, the little potentate all the while in his final sleep. The whole paper is worth the most careful study; it reveals not a little of his real nature, and unfolds very curiously the secret of his work, the vitality, and abiding power of his own creations; how he "invented a certain *Costigan*, out of scraps, heel-taps, odds and ends of characters," and met the original the other day, without surprise, in a tavern parlor. The following is beautiful: "Years ago I had a quarrel with a certain well-known person (I believed a statement regarding him which his friends imparted to me, and which turned out to be quite incorrect). To his dying day that quarrel was never quite made up. I said to his brother, 'Why is your brother's soul still dark against me? *It is I who ought to be angry and unforgiving, for I was in the wrong.*'" *Odisse quem læseris* was never better contravened. But what we chiefly refer to now is the profound pensiveness of the following strain, as if written with a presentiment of what was not then very far off: "Another *Finis* written; another milestone on this journey from birth to the next world. Sure it is a subject for solemn cogitation. Shall we continue

this story-telling business, and be voluble to the end of our age?" "Will it not be presently time, O prattler, to hold your tongue?" And thus he ends:—

"Oh, the sad old pages, the dull old pages; oh, the cares, the *ennui*, the squabbles, the repetitions, the old conversations over and over again! But now and again a kind thought is recalled, and now and again a dear memory. Yet a few chapters more, and then the last; after which, behold Finis itself comes to an end, and the Infinite begins."

He sent the proof of this paper to his "dear neighbors," in Onslow Square, to whom he owed so much almost daily pleasure, with his corrections, the whole of the last paragraph in manuscript, and above a first sketch of it also in MS., which is fuller and more impassioned. His fear of "enthusiastic writing" had led him, we think, to sacrifice something of the sacred power of his first words, which we give with its interlineations:—

"Another Finis, another slice of life which *Tempus edax* has devoured! And I may have to write the word once or twice perhaps, and then an end of Ends. Finite is over, ~~and infinite beginning~~ Oh the troubles, the cares, the disputes, *ennui*, the ~~complications~~, the repetitions, the old conversations over and over again, and here and there and oh the delightful passages, the dear, the brief, the forever remembered! ~~And then~~ A few chapters more, and then the last, and then behold Finis itself coming to an end and the Infinite beginning!"

How like music this, — like one trying the same air in different ways ; as it were, searching out and sounding all its depths. “The dear, the brief, the forever remembered” ; these are like a bar out of Beethoven, deep and melancholy as the sea ! He had been suffering on Sunday from an old and cruel enemy. He fixed with his friend and surgeon to come again on Tuesday ; but with that dread of anticipated pain, which is a common condition of sensibility and genius, he put him off with a note from “yours unfaithfully, W. M. T.” He went out on Wednesday for a little, and came home at ten. He went to his room, suffering much, but declining his man’s offer to sit with him. He hated to make others suffer. He was heard moving, as if in pain, about twelve, on the eve of

“That the happy morn,
Wherein the Son of Heaven’s eternal King,
Of wedded maid, and virgin-mother born,
Our great redemption from above did bring.”

Then all was quiet, and then he must have died — in a moment. Next morning his man went in, and opening the windows found his master dead, his arms behind his head, as if he had tried to take one more breath. We think of him as of our Chalmers ; found dead in like manner ; the same child-like, unspoiled open face ; the same gentle mouth ; the same spaciousness and softness of nature ; the same look of power. What a thing to think of, —

his lying there alone in the dark, in the midst of his own mighty London; his mother and his daughters asleep, and, it may be, dreaming of his goodness. God help them, and us all! What would become of us, stumbling along this our path of life, if we could not, at our utmost need, stay ourselves on Him?

Long years of sorrow, labor, and pain had killed him before his time. It was found after death how little life he had to live. He looked always fresh with that abounding, silvery hair, and his young, almost infantine face, but he was worn to a shadow, and his hands wasted as if by eighty years. With him it is the end of Ends; finite is over, and infinite begun. What we all felt and feel can never be so well expressed as in his own words of sorrow for the early death of Charles Buller: —

“Who knows the inscrutable design?
 Blest be He who took and gave!
 Why should your mother, Charles, not mine,
 Be weeping at her darling's grave?
 We bow to Heaven that willed it so,
 That darkly rules the fate of all,
 That sends the respite or the blow,
 That 's free to give, or to recall.”







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